NATION

Centre may call Ram Setu nat'l monument

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BUSINESS

Reliance announces AI subsidiary; pacts with Google, Meta

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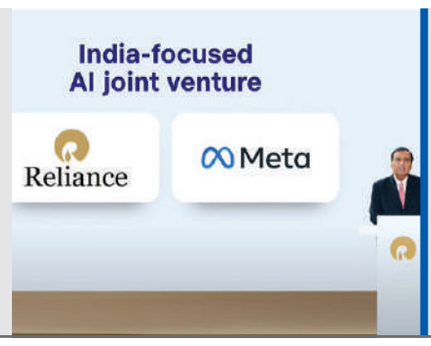

SPORTS

Harmanpreet's hat-trick helps India beat China

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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PHOTO: PTI

Man held for remarks against PM in Bihar

DARBHANGA, 29 AUG

Bihar Police have arrested a 20-year-old man, identified as Mohammad Rizvi alias Raza, for allegedly using abusive language against Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Voter Adhikar Yatra'. The arrest took place in the Singhwara locality of Darbhanga town. A case was registered following a complaint from Aditya Narayan Choudhary, president of the BJP's Darbhanga district. A video circulating on social media purportedly shows Rizvi using a Hindi expletive directed at Modi from a dais during the yatra. Notably, Rahul Gandhi, alongside his sister Priyanka Vadra and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, had departed from Darbhanga on motorcycles heading to Muzaffarpur earlier this week. *—PTI*

India's GDP grows 7.8% in Q1: Govt report

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

India's economy expanded by 7.8 per cent in April-June, the highest in five quarters, before US tariffs impacted growth, according to government data. The robust first quarter was driven mainly by strong performance in the farm sector, which grew by 3.7 per cent—up from 1.5 per cent in the previous year. India remains the world's fastest-growing major economy, outpacing China's 5.2 per cent growth in the same period. The previous highest GDP growth was 8.4 per cent in January-March of 2024. The manufacturing sector also saw a marginal rise to 7.7 per cent from 7.6 per cent. Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India projected FY26's annual GDP growth at 6.5 per cent, with quarterly projections of 6.5, 6.7, 6.6, and 6.3 per cent respectively.*—PTI*

India, Japan ink pact to explore moon together

Japan will invest 10 trillion yen in India over the next decade

TOKYO, 29 AUG

India and Japan on Saturday signed the implementing arrangement for the Chandrayaan-5 mission, a joint exploration of the polar region of the moon by the space agencies of the two countries.

The Implementing Arrangement between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) concerning Joint Lunar Polar Exploration Mission was inked on the sidelines of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Tokyo.

The Chandrayaan-5 mission aims to study the lunar volatile materials, including lunar water, in the vicinity of a Permanently Shadowed Region (PSR) in the lunar South pole. The mission will be launched by JAXA onboard its H3-24L launch vehicle, carrying the ISRO-made lunar lander, which will carry the Japan-made lunar rover.

Japan also pledged to invest 10 trillion yen (approximately Rs 60,000 cr) in India over the next decade and the two sides sealed a raft of big-ticket pacts, including a framework for defence ties and a 10-year roadmap to largely boost economic partnership -- decisions that came amid turbulence triggered by Washington's trade policies.

PM Narendra Modi with his Japanese counterpart Shigeru Ishiba during the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit, in Tokyo, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

The new measures were unveiled following talks between Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shigeru Ishiba.

The two sides firmed up 13 key pacts and documents and announced the launch of several transformative initiatives, including an economic security architecture to promote supply chain resilience in strategic sectors such as semiconductors, clean energy, telecom, pharmaceuticals, critical minerals and new and emerging technologies.

One of the agreements relates to promoting mobility of 50,000 skilled and semi-skilled personnel from India to Japan in the next five years. Another key pact was to advance cooperation in supply chain resilience for critical minerals.

Modi added that it is important for India and China to work together to bring stability to the world economic order. *—PTI*

>>>>More on Page 3

Modi, Xi likely to meet twice during SCO

Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping are expected to hold two bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Tianjin on Sunday, as both nations look to strengthen ties amid global trade tensions sparked by US President Donald Trump. Modi, who will arrive in Tianjin on Saturday evening from Japan, will have a bilateral meeting with President Xi around Sunday noon and a possible second one before the official banquet of the SCO summit. On Monday, Modi will take part in the SCO Summit and is likely to have a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin before leaving for home.

VOTE THEFT

LoP in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacts with a child during the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra', in West Champaran district, Bihar *PHOTO: PTI*

EC shows Bihar village living in 1 house: RaGa

PATNA, 29 AUG

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi fired a fresh salvo at the Election Commission, claiming that the draft electoral rolls in Bihar show "an entire village" in Gaya district to be "residing in the same house".

The Congress's post on X said that in Nidani village of Gaya district, under Barachatti assembly segment, "all 947 voters" of a booth have been shown to be "residents of house number six".

"We can only imagine the scale of irregularities on the state and national level," the party said.

However, the office of the Chief Electoral Officer of Bihar came out with a clarification issued on the Gaya district magistate's X handle that said that notional house number is given in villages or slum clusters where the houses do not have any actual serial numbers. This is done to make easy the process of enlisting voters.

Video clips showed residents of the village expressing satisfaction with the special intensive revision of electoral rolls, but upset over "attempts to defame the area".

Meanwhile, poll authorities in Bihar have issued notices to nearly three lakh electors with "doubtful citizenship."

These electors are among the 7.24 crore people who have found their names in the draft electoral rolls published on 1 August. *—PTI*

>>>>More on Page 3

D'sthala: Sujata Bhat to withdraw complaint?

MANGALURU, 29 AUG

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Dharmasthala case questioned one of the complainants, Sujata Bhat, for the third consecutive day on Friday. According to sources, Sujata Bhat, who had previously alleged that her daughter Ananya disappeared from the Dharmasthala temple premises in 2003, reportedly expressed her desire to withdraw the complaint during interrogation.

Investigators noted that she appeared to be under significant pressure and was struggling with the sustained interrogation.

SIT officials found her statements on Friday to be contradictory to her earlier claims, suggesting she was lying and obstructing the legal process.

While Sujata had earlier claimed that the disappearance of her daughter was part of a larger conspiracy, she disclosed the names of certain individuals allegedly involved in it, on Friday.

However, the SIT officials did not confirm the details, stating that the disclosures are being verified.

Legal experts said even if Sujata formally withdraws her complaint, the SIT would likely continue the investigation, as the matter involves serious allegations and has already entered the judicial process. *—PTI*

>>>>More on Page 2

- Bhatt appeared before the SIT and investigators noted that she was struggling with the sustained interrogation. She later indicated that she would like to withdraw her appeal

DKS vows ₹103 cr for Kempegowda fort

MAGADI, 29 AUG

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said the Congress government had allocated Rs 103 crore to the historic fort in Magadi built by Nadaprabhu Kempegowda.

He laid the foundation stone for various departmental projects in Magadi and announced that the Someshwara temple and Kempegowda's tomb in Kempapura, in City, will also be developed.

"We are constructing a 100-bed hospital on a 2-acre plot at a cost of 41 crore rupees," he later wrote on X. "A plan has been drawn up to develop Gouramma Lake in Magadi at a cost of 20 crore rupees."

He added that development works worth Rs 13 crore had commenced in Manchanabele, in Bengaluru South.

"We have undertaken an ambitious project to fill Magadi's lakes with water at a cost of 90 crore rupees," he added. *—Salar News*

Five killed in Uttarakhand rains

DEHRADUN, 29 AUG

Five people were killed and 11 went missing as heavy rains and cloudbursts wreaked havoc in various districts of Uttarakhand early Friday, triggering landslides that left about 30-40 families buried under mounds of rubble and damaged houses.

Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Tehri and Bageshwar were among the districts hard hit by the natural calamity.

Excers overnight rainfall damaged nearly half a dozen houses in Pausari Gram Panchayat in Kapkot area of Bageshwar district, killing two people and leaving three others missing.

Rescue teams assist locals after a cloudburst in Bageshwar district, Uttarakhand *PHOTO: PTI*

A house and a cowshed were buried under landslide debris in Mopata village of Chamoli district, killing a couple and leaving another injured.

Meanwhile, Punjab's Patiala issued an alert following heavy rain. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

100 pigs die of African Swine Flu in K'taka

CHINTAMANI, 25 AUG

Over 100 pigs have died of African Swine Flu at a rearing farm in Hebbari village under Ulavadi Gram Panchayat in Chintamani taluk, Chikkaballapur district. Authorities confirmed the outbreak after laboratory tests on carcass samples returned positive.

Farm owner Venkatareddy raised alarm when several Yorkshire pigs began dying suddenly. Officials from the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Biological rushed to the spot, collected samples, and later began culling the remaining stock. On Friday, 57 surviving pigs, aged between two and six months, were culled and buried in pits lined with limestone to prevent spread.

Deputy Director Dr. Rangappa said the pigs had been brought from Hassan months ago and were reared for meat marketing. While the flu is not zoonotic, he said strict containment measures are essential. The outbreak was recently detected in Kunigal and Devanahalli as well.

Authorities assured compensation to the farmer as per norms, stressing that protocols followed are similar to bird flu management, with surveillance stepped up to prevent further spread.

—Salar News

Mahua says Shah's head should be cut off

KOLKATA, 29 AUG

TMC MP Mahua Moitra has triggered a fresh political controversy with her remarks against Union Home Minister Amit Shah, accusing him of failing to check infiltration from Bangladesh and allegedly stating his "head should be cut off and put on the table."

Speaking to reporters in West Bengal's Nadia district on the sidelines of an event on Thursday, Moitra reportedly alleged that the Union government was shirking its responsibilities on border security.

"They are repeatedly talking about infiltrators; but the border of India is protected by five forces, and that is directly the Home Ministry's responsibility," she said. "If we don't have anyone to protect our borders, if people from another country are entering every day, if our citizens complain that infiltrators are eyeing our mothers and sisters and snatching our lands, then the first thing you should do is cut Amit Shah's head and put it on your table." *—PTI*

BANGLA MIGRANT ROW

Does Centre want border wall like the US? asks SC

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

The Supreme Court asked the Centre whether it wanted to build a border wall like the US to prevent illegal immigrants from entering the country.

The apex court on Friday said that Bengali and Punjabi Indians shared the "same legacy of cultural and linguistic heritage" with some communities from neighbouring countries.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi asked the Centre to apprise it about the standard operating procedures (SOP) adopted by the governments in deporting illegal migrants, especially to Bangladesh. The top court also impleaded the Gujarat government as a party in the matter.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, objected to the petition filed by the West Bengal Migrant Welfare Board alleging detention of Bengali-speaking migrant workers on suspicion of being Bangladeshi nationals and said no aggrieved parties were present before the court.

"We know how some state governments thrive on illegal immigrants. Demographic changes have become a serious issue," he said.

The bench told Mehta that those aggrieved were perhaps unable to reach the apex court for want of resources.

Mehta, referring to advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioners, said such "public spirited persons" must help them approach the court, besides helping people in the US where the issue over illegal immigration was big.

Justice Bagchi subsequently asked Mehta, "Do you want to build a border wall like in America to prevent illegal immigrants from entering India?"

Mehta replied, "Certainly not but there are no individual complainants.... We are trying to ensure immigrants don't eat away at our resources."

Bhushan had alleged Bengali speaking persons were being picked up and forcefully pushed into Bangladesh.

Justice Bagchi underlined a distinction between a person trying to enter the country illegally and those who were within the Indian landmass and said for the ones on the inside, certain procedures needed to be followed.

The bench sought a clarification on the plea, which said Bengali speaking people were treated as foreigners. *—PTI*

Two new judges take oath in SC

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Vipul Manubhai Pancholi were sworn in as Supreme Court judges on Friday. Chief Justice of India BR Gavai administered the oath of office. The appointment follows the Supreme Court Collegium's recommendation on 25 August, which was approved by the Centre on 27 August. The Collegium, led by the CJI and comprising Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, JK Maheshwari, and BV Nagarathna—who dissented on Justice Pancholi's elevation—made the decision by a 4:1 vote. With these appointments, the apex court now functions with its full complement of 34 judges. *—ANI*

28 GP members banned from elections for 6yrs

BELAGAVI, 29 AUG

The State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department has barred all 28 members of the Shindi Kurabet gram panchayat in Gokak taluk from contesting elections for six years due to an illegal property transfer. The department also dismissed the president, Renuka Irappa Patil, and vice president, Bhimappa Yalappa Buranal, from their positions. Upper Chief Secretary Uma Mahadevan stated that all 26 members, except for two, had their memberships revoked. The controversial property transfer involved Shanta Nagappa Potadar and Ramachandra Danappa Potdar, which was approved during meetings held on 25 February and 25 March 2022. Following Shanta's complaint, the department investigated and initiated action under sections 48(4) and 48(5) of the Karnataka Gramaswaraj and Panchayat Raj Act, 1993. *—SALAR NEWS*

PHOTO: PTI

Patil explores direct flights from City to Japan

BENGALURU, 29 AUG

State Minister MB Patil met with Japan's Consul General Nakane Tsutomu in the City, to discuss the launch of direct flight services from the City to Osaka and Nagoya, two key industrial cities in Japan. Patil, who oversees infrastructure and industries, stated, "There is a need to start direct flight services to Osaka and Nagoya," given the existing only direct route to Tokyo. He highlighted that Japanese firms have pledged investments of Rs 7,500 crore in sectors such as data centres and manufacturing. Furthermore, he plans a 10-day visit to Japan beginning 6 September to enhance investment, cultural, and educational ties, including potential collaborations with Visvesvaraya Technological University for Japanese language courses. *—PTI*

Clarify remark on Kannada, Goddess: Yaduveer to Banu

He says Banu made anti-Kannada remarks in a 2023 video

MYSURU, 29 AUG

In a sharp departure from his previous stance on the Dasara issue, BJP MP and the scion of Mysuru royal family Yaduveer Krishnadatta Wadiyar said that International Booker prize winner Banu Mushtaq was against the Kannada language. He asked her to clarify her stance.

Speaking to press in Mysuru, he stated that the writer had made anti-Kannada statements when she opposed Goddess Bhuvaneshwari in a 2023 video that has recently gone viral. Wadiyar said he agrees with the saffron party's stance on the issue.

The sentiments of Kannadigas and Hindus were hurt by her, he said. In the video, Mushtaq had said the practice of elevation of Kannada language to status of Goddess and placing it inside a temple was exclusionary.

Mushtaq should clarify her stance because Chamundi Hill is a religious place and she would be required to worship the Mother Goddess, he said.

"We will welcome her if she accepts the background of religious rituals involved. It will be good if she withdraws her (2023) statement because it has hurt Hindu religious sentiments," he said.

"We heard that she has said she has no problem in worshipping Goddess Chamundeshwari. If that's true, then we don't have any problem," he added.

Earlier, Yaduveer had welcomed the government's decision to invite Mushtaq to inaugurate Dasara.

—Salar News with Agencies

BJP MP Yaduveer Krishnadatta Wadiyar; International Booker prize winner Banu Mushtaq PHOTO: X

- Yaduveer had earlier welcomed the decision to invite Mushtaq. However, he now said that she is anti-Kannada and anti-Hindu after a video emerged of a 2023 speech

Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada and Chikkamagaluru districts received heavy rainfall on Friday morning PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

Rains continue to pound State

BENGALURU, 29 AUG

Rains lashed severals parts of the State on Friday morning, disrupting normal life.

In Kalaburagi district, overnight rains reportedly destroyed large quantities of the niger (oilseed) crop, causing significant losses to farmers.

Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada and Chikkamagaluru districts received heavy rainfall on Friday morning.

An orange alert was sounded in Kodagu, with the district administration issuing holidays for schools, colleges, and Anganwadi centres.

An orange alert denotes "very heavy" rainfall of 11 to 20cm.

In Bhupur village in Raichur Lingasugur taluk, drain water entered several houses, damaging food grains and other household items. Villagers have demanded action against the Panchayat development officer alleging negligence in drain maintenance.

Residents living downstream of the Tungabhadra Dam have been advised to remain vigilant. It's current inflow is likely to rise due to inflows from Tunga reservoir, Bhadra Dam, Varada river and rainfall in the reservoir catchment area.

Isolated heavy rains were forecast in the coastal and Malnad districts and the northern interior districts. Moderate rain was forecast in the southern interior districts. *—PTI*

Man kills daughter, stages suicide & performs last rites

KALABURAGI, 29 AUG

A man allegedly strangled his daughter, forced pesticide into her mouth to stage it as a suicide, and later performed her last rites because she was in a relationship with a young man from a different community, Kalaburagi Police Commissioner Sharanappa SD said on Friday.

The incident took place on Thursday in Melakunda village, he added. Police have arrested girl's father, Shankar.

"The man had opposed her relationship, as he has five daughters. He feared that an inter-caste marriage would affect the marriage prospects of his other three daughters," he added. "Shankar strangled her and poured pesticide into her mouth to make it appear as a suicide. Villagers believed it and participated in last rites," he said. *—PTI*

NATIONAL SPORTS DAY

CM hikes cash awards for national sports medallists

BENGALURU, 29 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced a hike in cash awards for medal winners at national sporting events, saying the government is committed to supporting athletes and helping them achieve greater heights.

"We have decided to give Rs 7 lakh for gold medal winners, Rs 5 lakh for silver and Rs 3 lakh for bronze," Siddaramaiah said while presenting cash awards to athletes who brought laurels to the State at the 38th National Games held in Uttarakhand.

Congratulating sportspersons for securing the fifth position in the medal tally for the State with 34 gold, 18 silver and 28 bronze medals, he said, "This is a matter of pride for all of us. I hope Karnataka will secure the first position in the next Games."

The Chief Minister recalled that during his earlier tenure in 2015, cash awards of Rs 5 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 2 lakh were announced for gold, silver and bronze medalists respectively.

Siddaramaiah also said that managers and coaches who help athletes win medals will be rewarded.

On international sporting platforms, he said the government will award Rs 5 crore for Olympic, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games gold medalists, Rs 3 crore for silver and Rs 2 crore for bronze medalists.

"This is not an inducement, but encouragement," he asserted.

LOST '91 POLLS DUE TO FRAUD

Siddaramaiah said that he had lost the 1991 Lok Sabha Elections due to "cheating" and the senior advocate Ravivarma Kumar filed a case without any legal fees.

Siddaramaiah felicitated former Advocate General Ravivarma Kumar on Thursday, and recalled, "In 1991, when I contested Lok Sabha elections, I lost it because of cheating (fraud) we can say. At that time, Ravivarma Kumar only filed the case as my advocate by drafting it without taking any fees, and he fought it for me." *—PTI/ANI*

Siddaramaiah leaves for Bihar to take part in 'Vote Adhikar Rally'

Siddaramaiah left for Bihar with a delegation of high-ranking ministers to take part in Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's 'Vote Adhikar Rally', his office said in a statement on Friday. The Chief Minister landed at Gorakhpur airport in Uttar Pradesh in the morning and travelled by road to Gopalganj in Bihar. Siddaramaiah is accompanied by around 20 leaders, including ministers KJ George, G Parameshwara, BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan, Satish Jarkiholi, K Sudhakar, Political Secretary Naseer Ahmed, legal adviser Ponnanna, Legislative Council Chief Whip Saleem Ahmed, MLCs BK Hariprasad and the Chief Minister's son Yathindra Siddaramaiah.

STARSTRUCK

Former cricketer Rahul Dravid with fans during the opening of the UNIQLO store at Orion Mall in Rajkumar Road in Bengaluru, on Friday PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

Dharmasthala: KSWC condemns harassment of Sujatha Bhatt

BENGALURU, 29 AUG

The Karnataka State Commission for Women (KSCW) has appealed to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the rape, murder, and missing persons cases in Dharmasthala to grant immediate protection for **Sujata Bhatt**, the complainant and mother of allegedly missing student Ananya Bhatt.

In an official letter to SIT officials, the Commission slammed the media's relentless harassment of Sujata Bhatt.

Reporters have allegedly chased, humiliated, and coerced her into giving conflicting statements, even going so far as to enter her home late at night for intrusive video recordings, the letter said.

"This isn't journalism; it's intimidation," the letter said. The Commission fears that the mental and physical toll on Sujata Bhatt could silence a critical voice in the high-profile case.

The SIT was formed following widespread public outcry and media reports on sexual violence and disappearances of women and students in Dharmasthala.

Sujata Bhatt, who initially filed a missing persons complaint about her daughter, has since given conflicting statements, even claiming that she never had a daughter. However, she later retracted that statement.

- In an official letter to SIT officials, the Commission slammed the media's relentless harassment of Sujata Bhatt. Reporters have allegedly chased, humiliated, and coerced her into giving conflicting statements, even going so far as to enter her home late at night for intrusive video recordings, the letter said

The KSCW urged the SIT to provide immediate physical protection to Sujata Bhatt and ensure safe and private channels for victims and whistleblowers to give testimony and maintain confidentiality of complainants' identities .

The Commission emphasized that no woman should suffer a second time simply for seeking justice. *—Salar News*

Priyank says Bhagwat admitted RSS is against edu

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

Congress leader Priyank Kharge on Friday launched a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government after RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat remarked that quality education and healthcare have become unaffordable for ordinary citizens.

In a post on social media platform X, Kharge said Bhagwat's statement was an "open admission" of the Modi government's failure, accusing it of wasting 11 years on "PR and photo-ops" while neglecting basic needs. He dared ministers in Modi's Cabinet to counter Bhagwat's claims and mocked the BJP's IT cell for staying silent against the RSS chief.

Bhagwat, speaking during RSS centenary celebrations in New Delhi, also urged Indian families to ideally have three children, saying population growth can be both an asset and a burden. *—ANI*

TECHIE-TURNED-PANIPURI SELLER ARRESTED FOR WIFE'S SUICIDE

BENGALURU, 29 AUG

A man who left his software job to run a panipuri business has been arrested for allegedly driving his 27-year-old wife to suicide at their home in Suddaguntepalya in the City, police reported.

The victim, Shilpa Panchangamath, was found deceased on the night of Tuesday. Her mother, Sharada, has filed a complaint alleging harassment for dowry against her son-in-law, Praveen. The couple married on 5 December, 2022, with Shilpa's family claiming they spent approximately Rs 35 lakh on the wedding and presented 150g of gold to the groom.

The complaint alleges that Praveen, along with his mother, Shantavva, subjected Shilpa to ongoing mental and physical harassment, including demands for Rs 5 lakh for his business. *—PTI*

Skills, not degrees, will define future, says Patil

KOCHI, 29 AUG

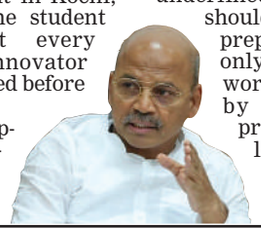
Karnataka's Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood, Sharanaprakash R Patil on Friday urged students to embrace failure as the first step towards learning and innovation.

Addressing the Global Skill Summit organized by the Kerala government in Kochi, Patil reminded the student community that every entrepreneur, innovator and leader has failed before achieving success.

"Failure is a stepping stone to success. Governments, industry, and academia can build frameworks, policies, and institutions, but real change will come from young people who dare to dream differently," he said.

Patil said that it is skills combined with higher education produce individuals who are not only employable, but are also capable for creating livelihood for others.

The Karnataka minister underlined that education should not be confined to preparing for exams only. The future of work will be defined by adaptability, problem-solving, collaboration, and innovation. *—Salar News*



'VIOLATION OF GOVT'S ORDER'

Forest Dept to seize control of Vishnuvardhan's memorial

Kannada film legend Vishnuvardhan's memorial PHOTO: X

BENGALURU, 29 AUG

Following the shocking overnight demolition of Kannada film legend Dr Vishnuvardhan's memorial at Abhimaan Studio on 7 August, the Forest Department has formally requested the Deputy Commissioner to seize control of the disputed land.

Deputy Conservator of Forests N Ravindra Kumar sent a letter to City District Magistrate Jagadeesh on 22 August, which came to light on Friday, citing multiple violations of the original land lease agreement.

The land in question, located in Survey No. 26 of Mailasandra village, Kengeri Hobli, South Bengaluru, was granted to TN Balakrishna in 1969 for setting up the iconic Abhimaan Studio.

The Forest Department's letter states that not only was the land used beyond its sanctioned purpose, but Balakrishna's heirs allegedly sold 10 acres of the land without proper authorisation.

According to the 9 April, 1969 government order, 20 acres were leased for 20 years on the condition that it be used solely for the development of the film studio. Sale, sub-leasing, or any alternative use was strictly prohibited.

However, in 2004, Balakrishna's his sons Ganesh and grandson Karthik sought permission from the District Collector to sell 10 acres of the land on the pretext of financial difficulties. The sale was allegedly done using the special powers of the District Collector. They reportedly sold the property to fund renovations of the studio — an act the department claims breached the original lease conditions. Forest Department's letter called the sale a violation of the original government's order.

Government's move is seen as having potential to end era of once-celebrated Abhimaan Studio. *—Salar News*

PM has washed his hands off Manipur: Congress

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

The Congress on Friday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his visit to Japan and China, saying the long-suffering people of Manipur are still awaiting his visit but he has "simply washed his hands off" the state. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "We are being forced to normalise relations with China -- largely on their terms." He said Modi "stubbornly refused" to engage with Manipur, its political parties and leaders, civil society organisations and the people. Modi arrived in Tokyo on Friday for a two-day visit, after which he will travel to China to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's annual summit. *—PTI*

Love jihad case: Cong councillor surrenders

INDORE, 29 AUG

Absconding Congress councillor Anwar Qadri, accused of funding 'love jihad', surrendered before the Indore district court in Madhya Pradesh on Friday, police said. Qadri had been on the run for nearly two months and turned himself in a day before police were due to seize his properties. Authorities had earlier announced a Rs 40,000 reward for information on his whereabouts. Police allege Qadri gave Rs 3 lakh to two men Sahil Sheikh and Altaf Shah to convert women under the guise of relationships. Both were arrested in June on charges including rape. Indore collector Ashish Singh had invoked the National Security Act against Qadri, who already faces 18 criminal cases at different police stations. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

'T'gana may lose RS 7K cr annually from GST reforms'

HYDERABAD, 29 AUG

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has announced that the state anticipates an annual revenue loss of nearly Rs 7,000 crore following proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate rationalisation. Addressing the media in New Delhi, he requested proper compensation from the Centre for the expected losses, which he stated would adversely affect welfare and developmental programmes. Vikramarka highlighted that Telangana's cumulative losses since GST's introduction amount to about Rs 80,000 crore. He confirmed that the state earned only Rs 42,443 crore through GST for 2024-25, significantly lower than the Rs 69,373 crore expected without it. Finance ministers from opposition-led states demanded a five-year compensation plan for potential losses of Rs 2 lakh crore due to GST reforms. *—PTI*

Naxal victims urge MPs not to support Sudershan Reddy

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

A group of victims of the Naxal violence on Friday appealed to all members of Parliament not to support opposition-sponsored vice presidential candidate B Sudershan Reddy, alleging that he was the person who halted the "people's movement" against the extremists at a time when they were about to become extinct. Addressing a press conference here, the victims of the Naxal violence, under the banner of Bastar Shanti Samiti (BSS), alleged that because of Reddy's order as the then judge of the Supreme Court to end the Salwa Judum, their struggle had not only weakened but also destroyed the lives of many. In the 2011 order, a bench comprising Justice Reddy, said that the state cannot outsource its duties to untrained vigilantes, and halted the activities of the Salwa Judum. *—PTI*

'India is Russia's oil money laundromat'

Trump aide says India buys cheap Russian oil, processes it & exports to Europe, Africa

WASHINGTON, 29 AUG

A day after claiming that the Ukraine conflict was "Modi's war", White House trade adviser Peter Navarro has accused India of being an "oil money laundromat for the Kremlin".

The top Trump administration official also described as "strategic freeloading" New Delhi continuing to buy Russian weapons while demanding that US firms transfer sensitive military technologies and set up manufacturing plants in India.

"If India, the world's largest democracy, wants to be treated like a strategic partner of the US, it needs to act like one," he said, putting out a series of social media posts attacking New Delhi.

Navarro, Trump administration's Senior Counsellor for Trade and Manufacturing, has been consistently targeting India over the last few days after ties between Washington and New Delhi saw a major downturn over Trump's policies on trade and tariffs.

Trump's trade advisor Peter Navarro said that if India wasts to be treated like US' strategic partner, it should act like one *PHOTO: ANI*

The trade adviser said the 50 per cent tariff — 25 per cent for unfair trade and 25 per cent for national security — was a direct response.

"India's Big Oil lobby has turned the largest democracy in the world into a massive refining hub and oil money laundromat for the Kremlin," Navarro claimed.

He went on to say that Indian refiners buy cheap Russian oil, process it, and export fuels to Europe, Africa, and Asia.

The trade adviser said American consumers buy Indian goods while India keeps out US exports through high tariffs and non-tariff barriers. He claimed that before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russian oil made up "less than one per cent of India's imports and today it is over 30 per cent — more than 1.5 million barrels a day".

This surge was driven by Indian profiteers and carried the added price of blood and devastation in Ukraine, he alleged. *—PTI*

Moscow gained from trade with India: Ukraine

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

PHOTO: ANI

Amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, Ukraine's Ambassador to India Oleksandr Polishchuk asserted that Kyiv "will not give up and will not accept any territorial concessions".

He suggested that Moscow has benefitted from trading with New Delhi.

Claiming that Russia may face challenges in funding social programmes by next year, he said that it should "use this (oil) money for enhancing the social situation in Russia" and "not to feed the war".

Polishchuk's comments also come in the backdrop of the US imposing 50 per cent tariff on Indian imported goods.

On asked about Trump's trade advisor Peter Navarro's remarks that the road to peace runs through New Delhi, Polishchuk said, "It's probably a question for the US Embassy here, not for me." *—PTI*

Assam can't be led by people who frequent Pakistan: Shah

GUWAHATI, 29 AUG

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a sharp attack on the Congress in Assam, claiming the state "cannot be led by people who frequently visit Pakistan", in an apparent reference to state Congress President Gaurav Gogoi.

Addressing a gathering of panchayat representatives, Shah sounded the poll bugle for the Assam Assembly elections scheduled for March-April next year, expressing confidence that the BJP-led NDA will secure a third consecutive term. He credited the "massive development works" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for the party's electoral strength.

Shah accused the Congress of "sympathising with infiltrators, promoting encroachments, and fostering corruption". He highlighted allegations about Gogoi's British wife's alleged links to Pakistan's ISI and claimed she had travelled between India and Pakistan 19 times.

Home Minister Amit Shah, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and others during a visit to the Jyoti Bishnu Cultural Complex in Guwahati *PHOTO: PTI*

The Union minister stated that the BJP government had freed 1,29,548 acres of land from "encroachers" and restored the sanctity of Srimanta Sankardeva and Mahapurush Madhavdeva's satras. He praised Sarma's government for welfare schemes, including scholarships for over nine lakh girls and the appointment of 1.21 lakh youths without "corruption or nepotism".

"Assam has bid goodbye to Congress," Shah declared, asserting that the BJP would continue driving development and stability across the Northeast. *—PTI*

Cong calls Shah a weapon of 'mischievous distraction'

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

The Congress on Friday dubbed Home Minister Amit Shah as a "Weapon of Mischievous Distraction" and "malicious defamation", accusing him of spreading "lies" about Rahul Gandhi after being "rattled, disturbed and unnerved" by the response to the Voter Adhikar Yatra in Bihar.

The Congress attack came soon after Shah, while addressing an event in Guwahati, said Gandhi should apologise for the "abuses" hurled at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his late mother during the Yatra.

Congress and Gandhi have come under heavy attack by BJP, after a purported video showed an unidentified person using a Hindi expletive against Modi from a dais raised during the yatra in Darbhanga town, from where the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, party general secretary Priyanka Vadra and RJD's Tejashwi Yadav left for Muzaffarpur on motorcycles.

There can be no greater decline in public life and politics than "abusing Modi's mother" Shah said. *—PTI*

Gujarat bitcoin extortion: Ex-MLA, ex-SP jailed

AHMEDABAD, 29 AUG

An Ahmedabad sessions court on Friday sentenced former Gujarat BJP MLA Nalin Kotadiya, ex-Amreli Superintendent of Police Jagdish Patel, and 12 others to life imprisonment in the high-profile 2018 bitcoin extortion case.

The court found the accused guilty of kidnapping Surat-based builder Shailesh Bhatt and his business partner Kirit Paladia from Gandhinagar on 9 February, 2018 and extorting 200 bitcoins worth Rs 32 crore at the time.Kotadiya, who represented the Dhari constituency was implicated alongside Patel and nine Amreli police constables. *—PTI*

Jarange starts Maratha quota strike; traffic comes to a halt

MUMBAI, 29 AUG

Maratha quota movement leader Manoj Jarange began his indefinite hunger strike at the Azad Maidan in south Mumbai on Friday, vowing not to leave till the community's demands were met.

The government said it was ready to talk with him over his demands, while many MPs and MLAs from the state's Marathwada region visited Jarange at the protest venue.

The 43-year-old activist received a rousing welcome from thousands of supporters, sporting saffron caps, scarves and flags, after he reached the protest venue around 9.45am.

He said the government's "lack of cooperation" had compelled the community to march to Mumbai.

Jarange, who began his fast at 10am, repeatedly urged his supporters to protest peacefully and not inconvenience Mumbaikars.

Additionally, Office-goers faced inconvenience on Friday morning as thousands of Maratha protesters headed to the Azad Maidan in south Mumbai to join the protest launched by activist Manoj Jarange.

Traffic slowed down in the city's southern and eastern parts.Over 150 supporters of Jarange protested in front of Mantralaya in south Mumbai before they heeded police requests to disperse. *–PTI*

SC to hear pleas on Bihar SIR deadline extension

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

- The court said it will hear the applications of the political parties on Monday after advocates Prashant Bhushan and Shoeb Alam, appearing for the Rashtriya Janta Dal said that several of them have filed applications for extension of deadlines.

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear on 1 September pleas of the RJD and AIMIM seeking extension of deadline for filing of claims and objections in the special intensive revision of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar.

The deadline for filing claims and objections is also 1 September.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said it will hear the applications of the political parties on Monday after advocate Prashant Bhushan and senior advocate Shoeb Alam, appearing for the Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD), said that several of them have filed applications for extension of deadlines.

Advocate Nizam Pasha, appearing for the AIMIM, said time needs to be extended due to large scale filing of claims and objections.

Pasha submitted that 80,000 claims were filed before the 22 August order while post the order 95,000 claims have been filed.

The bench asked the petitioners why they did not approach the Election Commission for the relief.

Bhushan said they have but the request is not being considered.

On 22 August, the top court directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to allow excluded voters to submit claims through online mode besides making physical submissions in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise of electoral roll in poll-bound Bihar. *—PTI*

Annamalai alleges 'Ungaludan Stalin' petitions discarded

CHENNAI, 29 AUG

BJP leader K Annamalai has accused the Tamil Nadu government, led by the DMK, of neglecting public grievances submitted through its outreach programme, 'Ungaludan Stalin' (Stalin with you). Annamalai alleged that the complaints were discarded like rubbish in the river, specifically citing petitions found floating in the Vaigai River in Sivagangai district.

"The so-called Ungaludan Stalin Scheme launched recently has now been exposed," Annamalai stated in a social media post, asserting that grievances from citizens were treated with disdain. He characterised the DMK government as a "patch work-model" administration that squanders taxpayer money on promotional campaigns.

Accompanying his remarks, Annamalai shared a video clip showing the petitions reportedly collected under the programme floating in the water.

The DMK has yet to respond to the allegations levelled by Annamalai. *—PTI*

Japan gifts Modi a traditional doll

TOKYO, 29 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was presented with a traditional Daruma doll, seen as a symbol of good luck, during his visit to Japan on Friday.

Modi was presented a Daruma doll by Rev Seishi Hirose, Chief Priest of the Shorinzan Daruma-Ji temple, Takasaki-Gunma, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a press release.

The Daruma doll is considered auspicious and a good luck charm in Japanese culture.

In a post on social media, Modi said, "Daruma is considered to be an important cultural symbol in Japan and also has a connect with India. It is influenced by Bodhidharma, a noted monk." Takasaki City in Gunma is the birthplace of the famous Daruma dolls. This tradition is based on the legacy of Bodhidharma, an Indian monk . *—PTI*

During his visit to Japan for the India-Japan Annual Summit, PM Modi was gifted a Daruma doll by chief priest of a temple *PHOTO: PTI*

'NOT GOING TO TOLERATE'

BJP & Cong workers clash in Patna over insult to Modi

PATNA, 29 AUG

Workers of the BJP and the Congress clashed in Patna on Friday during a protest march taken out by the ruling party in protest against the alleged use of abusive language for Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Rahul Gandhi's 'Voter Adhikar Yatra'.

BJP workers, led by senior leaders like ministers Nitin Nabin and Sanjay Saraogi, besides MLA Sanjiv Chaurasia, marched to Sadaqat Ashram, the state Congress headquarters, a couple of kilometres away, raising slogans against the incident in Darbhanga two days ago.

"We are not going to tolerate the insult to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Rahul Gandhi and his associates must apologise to the nation", said Nabin.

- BJP workers, led by senior leaders like ministers Nitin Nabin and Sanjay Saraogi, besides MLA Sanjiv Chaurasia, marched to Sadaqat Ashram, the state Congress headquarters, raising slogans against the incident.

The gates of Sadaqat Ashram were reportedly locked from inside by Congress workers who allegedly pelted BJP cadres with stones.

The situation was brought under control following the intervention of the police, which persuaded the BJP workers to retreat.

"It was a minor clash, and we have received complaints of injuries sustained by people from both sides. The entire matter will be investigated and further action will be taken accordingly", Superintendent of Police, Patna (Central) Diksha told PTI.

Meanwhile, a group of Congress workers sat on a dharna outside the Sadaqat Ashram gates in protest against "hooliganism" (gundagardi) of the BJP. *—PTI*

BJP supporters stage a protest over the objectionable comments made against Prime Minister Narendra Modi by a man during the 'Vote Adhikar Yatra', outside Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee office in Patna *PHOTO: PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

5 lawyers convicted for 2009 attack on journalist

INDORE, 29 AUG

A court in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, has convicted five lawyers for brutally attacking journalist Ghanshyam Patel in Ujjain in 2009. On Thursday, additional sessions judge Shrikrishna Dagliya sentenced Dharmendra Sharma, Shailendra Sharma, Bhavendra Sharma and Purshottam Rai to seven years of rigorous imprisonment, while Surendra Sharma, 90, was given three years due to his age. Patel was assaulted 2009 when he appeared in court as a witness. They snatched his revolver, gold chain and watch, and threatened him against testifying. The case was later shifted from Ujjain to Indore. The court said the accused, being lawyers, betrayed the rule of law by committing the crime inside court premises..*—PTI*

Kerala boy electrocuted by decorative lights

KANNUR, 29 AUG

A five-year-old boy died after being electrocuted from decorative LED bulbs at his home in Kolari near Mattannur. The deceased, Muhayudeen, touched one of the bulbs while playing in an area decorated for a celebration, leading to the fatal electric shock. He was rushed him to a hospital in Koothuparamba, where he succumbed to his injuries. Following a preliminary inquiry, the Mattannur police confirmed that the incident was accidental and decided not to register a case, considering the circumstances and the child's age. The body was returned to his family after all necessary legal formalities. Muhayudeen's father, who works abroad, is expected to return home shortly, police added. *—PTI*

Odisha teacher booked for molesting 7 girls

BHUBANESWAR, 29 AUG

A Sanskrit teacher from a government school in Odisha's Sundargarh district has been charged with sexually harassing seven female students. The headmistress filed a complaint against the teacher at the Gurundia Police Station on 20 August after the matter came to light. The police have registered a case against the teacher under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the POCSO Act. The accused allegedly sexually harassed the seven students inside the school premises on 16 August. The accused teacher is currently absconding, and efforts are underway to locate him. The police recorded the students' statements.*—PTI*

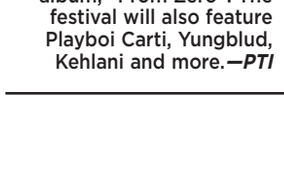


PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Linkin Park to perform in Mumbai in Jan 2026

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

Legendary rock band Linkin Park will perform in India for the first time as one of the headliners at Lollapalooza India 2026, organisers announced on Friday. The festival will be held in Mumbai on 24 and 25 January. Known for hits such as "In the End", "Numb" and "Crawling", the band described the concert as a long-awaited dream. "India has been somewhere we've wanted to play for a long time," said member Mike Shinoda. Following Chester Bennington's death in 2017, the band returned in 2024 with new lead vocalist Emily Armstrong and released their latest album, "From Zero". The festival will also feature Playboi Carti, Yungblud, Kehlani and more.*—PTI*

Cloudburst destroys lives in U'khand

30-40 families were trapped in debris in Rudraprayag; Others trapped in Chenagad

DEHRADUN, 29 AUG

Heavy rains and cloudbursts caused untold damage and destruction in Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Tehri and Bageshwar districts in Uttarakhand early Friday.

Incessant rain and landslides in Basukedaar area of Rudraprayag caused heavy damage in several villages. About 30-40 families were trapped in the debris and flood waters in Taljaman village.

The tragedy also claimed five lives, while 11 more were missing.

Four locals and several Nepalis were trapped under debris in Chenagad area. With the road broken, rescue teams faced difficulties in reaching them.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami in a post on X said, "Relief and rescue work is going on on a war footing by the local administration, I am constantly in touch with the officials in this regard.....," he said.

Incessant rains and cloudbursts also caused heavy losses in Budha Kedar in Tehri district where sheds built for livestock and temples were buried under the debris.

The security wall built by the irrigation department after the disaster last year also got washed away due to debris and heavy rains. The Balganga, Dharmganga and Bhilangana rivers are in spate.

The water level of Alaknanda and its tributaries and Mandakini river was rising. People residing near the rivers have been asked to remain vigilant.

The Badrinath national highway was blocked due to debris at many places. Work was underway to open the highway to traffic.

Pilgrims have been requested to set out on the journey only after taking information about the road condition and follow updates issued from time to time by the police and administration.

A red alert was issued in Bageshwar, Chamoli, Dehradun and Rudraprayag districts for Friday.

An orange alert of heavy to very heavy rains has also been issued for five other districts during the period. *—PTI*

SDRF personnel carry out a search and rescue operation at a village in Rudraprayag district in Uttarakhand after cloudburst and landslides hit several districts on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Cremations done on rooftops in Varanasi

VARANASI, 29 AUG

The rising water levels in Ganga and Varuna rivers have caused a fresh bout of floods in Varanasi, inundating low-lying areas, including all famous ghats and disrupting daily life.

At the Manikarnika and Harishchandra Ghats, cremations are being carried out on rooftops and in nearby alleys. The famous 'Ganga Aarti' at Dashashwamedh Ghat is now being performed symbolically on a nearby roof.

In areas like Ramana, Samne Ghat, Nagwa, Konia and Hukulganj, floodwaters have entered homes, with the residents unable to venture out. Children waded through flooded streets to attend their schools.

Sampurnanand, a resident of Ramana, said that the flood waters have damaged the seeds which the farmers had sown for different crops.

Shantanu Kumar Sinswar, sub-divisional magistrate of Rajatalab said that flood relief centres are active. Relief materials, including medicines and other necessary supplies, are available along with a team of doctors and nurses. *—PTI*

People carrying mortal remains of a relative wade through the flooded Manikarnika Ghat area in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh *PHOTO: PTI*

100 Odisha villages under water for 5th day

JAJPUR/BALASORE

Around 100 villages in Odisha's Balasore, Bhadrak and Jajpur districts were still under flood water for the fifth consecutive day on Friday.

Around 30,000 people in the villages are affected by flood waters, he said.

While 80 villages under Baliapal and Bhograi blocks in Balasore are encircled by flood water of around 4 feet high, a similar condition prevailed at 14 other villages under Dasrathpur block in Jajpur. Crops in several villages have been completely damaged.

"Flood waters have remained stagnant in our villages for the past five days and damaged my house, destroyed household articles, stored grain and fodder for the livestock," said Rabinda Samal, a resident man from Dasrathpur block.

Residents claimed that water accumulated in their villages after being drained from the overflowing rivers. They were also grappling with a shortage of drinking water and an infections.

Over 5,000 people were evacuated and sheltered in nearby school buildings. *—PTI*

Rains disrupt life in M'rashtra

LATUR, 29 AUG

Heavy rains have disrupted life in Maharashtra's Latur district, forcing authorities to declare a school holiday on Friday. With 29 of 60 revenue circles reporting excessive rainfall, rivers and streams overflowed, submerging bridges and roads. Rescue teams, villagers, and the Army saved several stranded people. Over 2,200 residents were evacuated in Latur and neighbouring Nanded, while key highways and local routes remain closed. *—PTI*

J&K national highway remains closed

JAMMU, 29 AUG

The Jammu-Srinagar national highway remained shut for the fourth day on Friday after heavy rains triggered landslides in the Udhampur-Ramban belt, leaving vehicles stranded. Nine inter-district roads are closed. *—PTI*

Kerala Minister's niece, husband found dead

KANNUR, 29 AUG

The police have launched an investigation into the deaths of Kerala Forest Minister AK Saseendran's niece and her husband, whose charred bodies were found in their home at Chirakkal in this north Kerala district on 28 August.

The deceased were identified as Sreelekha AK, 67 and her husband Premarajan PK, 76, who lived alone as their sons were working abroad.

According to police, the incident came to light around 6 pm on 28 August when the couple's car driver reached the house to take the vehicle in order to pick up their son, who was returning from abroad, from the airport.

The house was found locked from inside, and despite repeated knocking, no one responded.

With the help of relatives and neighbours, the door was broke open, and the bodies were discovered in the bedroom, a police officer said.

The police noticed head injuries on Sreelekha and a hammer with blood stains was recovered from the house, which suggested flow play.

Police suspect she may have been murdered before the bodies were set on fire.

Neighbours had last seen the couple on 27 August. However, police said no evidence of forcible entry into the house had been found.

Baliyapattam police have registered a case of unnatural death and launched an investigation.

The exact cause of death will be ascertained after the post-mortem to be conducted on Friday. A forensic team will also examine the victims' house. *—PTI/Agencies*

Sreelekha AK ; Premarajan PK *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

- The incident came to light around 6 pm on 28 August when the couple's car driver reached the house to take the vehicle in order to pick up their son from the airport. The house was found locked from inside and no one responded.

Centre may call Ram Setu nat'l monument

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

The Supreme Court on Friday sought response from the Centre on a plea by former Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy seeking a direction to the government to "expeditiously" decide his representation to declare 'Ram Setu' as a national monument.

'Ram Setu', also known as Adam's bridge, is a chain of limestone shoals between Pamban Island, off the south-eastern coast of Tamil Nadu, and Mannar Island, off the north-western coast of Sri Lanka.

The court agreed to hear Swamy's plea and posted the matter for hearing after four weeks.

In November 2023, the Centre had told the top court that it was looking into the issue on declaring 'Ram Setu' as a national heritage monument. The court had asked the Centre to take a decision and granted Swamy the liberty to move before it again.

The fresh plea filed by Swamy said no response or decision taken was conveyed either to him or to the apex court till date. It said the Centre is duty-bound to protect 'Ram Setu' from any form of misuse, pollution or desecration. *—PTI*

SC irked over 21 adjournments by Allahabad HC in bail matter

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

The Supreme Court has expressed frustration with the Allahabad High Court's handling of bail applications, citing 21 adjournments in one case. The bench, led by Chief Justice BR Gavai, emphasised the need for prompt decisions regarding personal liberty, requesting the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court to prioritise such matters.

This plea arose during the hearing of Kuldeep's bail application, which had been postponed for two months, prompting his lawyer to compare it to another defendant whose case was adjourned 43 times before being granted bail.

CJI Gavai reaffirmed, "Time and again, we have been saying matters regarding personal liberty must be heard and decided expeditiously." While the bench declined to grant bail to Kuldeep, it insisted that his case be addressed promptly on its next hearing date.

The court reiterated its stance against the high frequency of adjournments by the courts in cases that affect personal liberty. *—PTI*

CRIMES IN NORTH INDIA

Security agencies to develop strategies to counter terror

CHANDIGARH, 29 AUG

A high-level meeting of India's top security agencies was held in Panchkula on Friday to develop a joint strategy against terror threats and organised crime in North India. Attended by the IB, NIA, NSG, and DGPs of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Chandigarh, the session focused on coordination, capacity building, and prevention. NIA DG Sadanand Date highlighted that "terrorism infrastructure is constantly evolving," urging agencies to upgrade. He emphasised the importance of joint exercises, stating, "during 'golden hour', every agency must be clear on what, when and how to act." The NSG shared training updates, with 1,400 personnel. Haryana DGP called for media restraint on criminal publicity, stressing that the fight relies on real-time intelligence and cooperation. *—PTI*

Man kills girlfriend for breaking up

BHUJ, 29 AUG

A man allegedly killed a 19-year-old woman he was in a relationship with in Gujarat' Kutch district after she snapped ties with him and blocked his phone number.

The incident took place on 28 Aug when the accused Mohit Siddhpara confronted the victim, Sakshi Khania's throat outside her college on Airport Road in Bhuj. When Sakshi told him that she no longer wants to keep any relationship with, he slit her throat with a knife and fled from the spot.

Siddhpara ,22, a resident of Adipur town in Kutch was arrested, while Khania, succumbed to her injuries at a hospital here on Friday.

When Sakshi informed her mother about Mohit's call, she advised her to block his number, which she did. *—PTI*

RO-RO FERRY

M'rashtra to revive Vijaydurg's maritime legacy after 40 years

SINDHUDURG, 29 AUG

Passenger boat services are set to resume at the Vijaydurg port in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district after over 40 years with the launch of a roll-on roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferry next week that will cut the travel time between Mumbai and Konkan to five and a half hours.

The service is part of the Maharashtra government's ambitious plan for South Asia's fastest Ro-Ro service, connecting Mumbai with Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg.

Maharashtra Port Minister Nitesh Rane said that the service will begin on 1 September from Mumbai's Bhaucha Dhakka, with regular halts at Jaigad in Ratnagiri and Vijaydurg, a key port in Sindhudurg.

Workers were engaged in preparing the infrastructure. A floating jetty and pontoon have been put in place, while a tent is being erected to welcome passengers of the maiden voyage.

"This will be the first time that a passenger boat will directly berth at Vijaydurg," said port inspector Umesh Mahadik.

The new service is a revival of Vijaydurg's maritime tradition, which came to a halt in 1983 after passenger vessels Konkan Shakti and Konkan Sevak ceased operations.

The historic port next to the imposing Vijaydurg Fort, once the naval headquarters of Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, was witness to centuries of seafaring activity. Spices were exported from here during the British era. Vijaydurg village sarpanch Riyaz Qazi said that it would boost tourism. *—PTI*

Airport Authority manager booked for Rs 232 cr theft

NEW DELHI, 28 AUG

The CBI has filed an FIR against Rahul Vijay, a senior manager at the Airport Authority of India (AAI), for allegedly embezzling over Rs 232 crore through complex fictitious accounting during his tenure at Dehradun airport.

Discrepancies in the financial records from 2019 to 2023 were flagged in an internal audit, prompting a formal complaint from Chandrakanth P, another AAI manager, on 18 August.

Allegations include the creation of non-existent assets and duplicating legitimate work orders, enabling Vijay to funnel substantial funds into personal accounts. He reportedly inflated asset values, creating fictitious entries, with one instance showing inflated assets worth Rs 189 crore.

- Allegations include the creation of non-existent assets and duplicating legitimate work orders, enabling Vijay to funnel funds into his accounts.

The case is being investigated by the CBI's Economic Offences Unit. *—PTI*

More people have died in Gaza than in recent wars

Hamas killed about 1,200 people in Israel, mostly unarmed civilians, in its surprise attack on southern Israel on 7 October, 2023. Using Gaza health ministry statistics, the UN says more than 62,000 people have been killed in Gaza since Israel launched its military campaign against Hamas. An additional 1,000 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank.

The statistics do not distinguish between combatants and civilians. But Israeli government officials have consistently said their military works hard to keep civilian harm to a minimum. As Ophir Falk, a foreign policy adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said in 2024: "Any civilian casualty is a tragedy for sure. Israel seeks to minimise the civilian casualties, while Hamas seeks to maximise them."

Falk added: "We seek to minimise them for two main reasons… one, it's the right thing to do. We're the only Jewish country on Earth, and that is our policy to minimise civilian casualties. And the other reason is because it's effective." By effective, he means that hurting civilians can backfire. It can lead to a loss of domestic and international support for the war, as well as increased Palestinian resistance.

Israeli media outlets have also detailed the "extensive measures" the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) says it takes to keep civilians in Gaza safe. And they have repeated claims such as: "What the IDF has been doing in Gaza in this war is unprecedented in urban warfare, both in pace and caution."

Israeli officials dispute the numbers of Palestinian civilians killed in Gaza. Some claim that the Gaza health ministry and UN have "lied" about the numbers.

But figures from a classified Israeli military intelligence database, reported recently by the Guardian, indicate that 83 per cent of the Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in Gaza as of May are civilians.

Israeli media outlets have also detailed the "extensive measures" the Israel Defence Forces says it takes to keep civilians in Gaza safe **PHOTO: PTI**

Preventing civilian harm

The protection of civilians in war has not always been taken for granted. The US only began to emphasise the minimisation of inadvertent harm to civilians, or "collateral damage", after the Vietnam war ended in 1975.

The inadvertent killing of civilians and massacres such as My Lai, where 500 unarmed Vietnamese villagers were killed by US soldiers in 1968, were widely condemned. Precautions to avoid civilian harm, known as civilian casualty or civilian harm mitigation, have been integrated into US military operations since then.

The US developed a practice of making pre-strike estimates of possible civilian harm – collateral damage estimates – in the 1990s. This was refined during the post-9/11 wars.

US methods to minimise civilian casualties have been consistently updated, as recently as July 2024.

These precautions have not always been adhered to. They have also sometimes been relaxed when the US believes doing so is justified. But when they have been followed, the rate of civilian killing has been reduced.

The impetus for the US military to develop these programmes was not only to minimise harm to its own reputation and a desire to follow the laws of war. The point was also to avoid creating more militants by killing civilians.

The 2007 US Counterinsurgency Field Manual underscores the importance of avoiding civilian harm. It states: "an operation that kills five insurgents is counterproductive if collateral damage leads to the recruitment of 50 more insurgents."

It was equally important to convince observers that every effort was being made to ensure civilians were protected. As a 2006 study by US-based thinktank RAND corporation, paid for by the US air force, said:

"By emphasising the efforts that are being made to reduce civilian casualties (such as increased precision, smaller blast effects, improved target verification and so on), the Air Force and Department of Defense can help ensure that the US Congress and public have continued reason to trust that the US military is seeking new ways to reduce the prospects of civilian deaths in future military operations."

Israel also began to use some of these methods. And it developed its own, context-specific practices in its wars with the Palestinians and other neighbours. In fact, Israel was a pioneer in using targeted drone strikes that it said were aimed at killing Palestinian militant leaders while avoiding civilian harm.

However, investigations reveal that Israel loosened its rules of engagement after the 7 October attacks. The New York Times reported that an order by military leadership authorised officers to risk killing up to 20 people in each airstrike targeting Hamas. In one extreme example from July 2024, a strike on Hamas military leader Mohammed Deif killed at least 90 civilians and injured around 300 more.

Israel's military data also shows that Israeli officials have both overstated the number of militants they say have been killed and, by implication, the ratio of civilian to militant deaths.

Prior to the Guardian's report, Israeli officials said the military had killed 17,000 to 18,000 Hamas combatants and other "terrorists". They also implied that 50 per cent of the total deaths in Gaza were Hamas or other combatants. Netanyahu decried what he called "outrageous" claims of civilian casualty rates of up to 70 per cent.

But Israel's own numbers show the actual civilian casualty rate in Gaza is much higher than the figure Netanuyahu calls outrageous. It is also high compared to other conflicts. Research by the Costs of War project, which this author co-founded, show that the rate of civilian casualties in American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were 68 per cent and 26 per cent respectively.

Civilians never deserve to be harmed through carelessness, inadvertence or deliberate targeting. Yet given the kind of war Israel is fighting – using large, indiscriminate weapons to destroy buildings and failing to distinguish between combatant and noncombatant – it has unsurprisingly produced high civilian casualty rates. —The Conversation

Israeli officials dispute the numbers of Palestinian civilians killed in Gaza. Some claim that the Gaza health ministry and UN have "lied" about the numbers **PHOTO: PTI**

SALAR ساڈا

POST-TRUTH WORLD

What happens if we can't trust US economic data

We may already live in the post-truth world, but are we about to enter the era of post-truth statistics?

Each month, the US employment report is one of the most closely watched releases on the health of the world's largest economy. Financial markets can move sharply depending on the strength of the numbers.

This month, the obs report was weak. Hours later, US President Donald Trump called the numbers "phony" and fired the agency head, Erika McEntarfer.

It was an unprecedented attack on the government's impartial statistics body, the Bureau of Labour Statistics. This is the agency responsible for tracking jobs, wages and inflation – key numbers that tell us how the economy is really doing.

Trump followed that up this week with a further attack on the nation's economic institutions. He claimed in a social post he had fired one of the governors of the US central bank, the Federal Reserve. The governor, Lisa Cook, said he had no authority to do so.

With Trump's war on numbers and long-standing institutions, can we even trust US economic data anymore?

Some players in financial markets are already looking at alternative sources of data to get a real-time read on the health of the economy – such as satellite images of the shadows cast by oil tankers.

US President Donald Trump called the job data "phony" and fired the agency head **PHOTO: PTI**

Chipping away at independence

On the surface, replacing the head of the Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS) with a Trump loyalist might not sound like a big deal. But a BLS commissioner cannot single-handedly falsify the data. The agency is large, full of professional staff, and its data is processed through established systems and checks.

After firing McEntarfer, Trump then appointed a loyalist who floated the idea of not releasing the jobs data at all.

The employment report is one of the most closely watched indicators of the US economy, showing jobs created or lost each month. Without it, millions of Americans would lose a vital tool for understanding whether the economy is growing.

Data is disappearing – literally

Hundreds of US datasets and at least 8,000 government webpages have vanished because the staff maintaining them were fired. These datasets, which taxpayers funded and researchers rely on, are now endangered. In fact, academics have launched the Data Rescue Project to preserve and share this data publicly when the government stops doing so.

But here's the irony: now the administration is attacking and even firing officials on the grounds that the data is unreliable, when that unreliability is the direct result of their own budget cuts. It's a political catch-22: gut the agency, then blame it for the very decline in quality that underfunding caused.

The Fed relies on this report to set interest rates

Data is a public good, which means many benefit from it, yet data users are often unable or unwilling to pay for it. This is why data on labour market, inflation or economic growth (gross domestic product) is collected and published by the government, and paid for with taxpayers' money.

Good quality data enables good policy decisions. For example, the BLS jobs report and inflation numbers are studied carefully by the Federal Reserve to set US interest rates.

The consumer price index (CPI) – a widely watched inflation index – is a benchmark for the US central bank's mandate to keep inflation at its 2 per cent target. So the quality of the CPI sets the floor for the quality of interest rate decisions.

Financial markets, too, watch government data closely. Both US stock and bond markets, worth trillions of dollars, move sharply on jobs and inflation releases.

Some traders are sourcing their own data

Sophisticated institutional traders such as hedge funds have long profited from having access to higher-quality data. A recent academic paper investigates whether private satellite data can be a substitute for official data.

Focusing on two specific measures – US crude oil price, and Chinese manufacturing – the paper finds satellite data is so commonly used by traders that markets no longer react to government data releases, such as weekly surveys of crude oil inventories.

However, there are two caveats. First, not every type of macroeconomic data underpins trillion dollar markets like crude oil, making it profitable for traders to analyse the geometry of shadows cast by floating roofs of oil tankers, estimating quantities of oil stored in these tanks.

Second, this data is only available to a few deep-pocketed investors.

The technological advancements in AI and commercialisation of space make satellite data ubiquitous. But this data is still years away from replacing hand-collected inflation numbers or labour market surveys, which generate public statistics for everyone, not just for those who are prepared to pay.

—The Conversation

LETTERS

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Why grow plants in space? They can improve our life on Earth

Sometime in the 2040s, humans may well reach a new frontier – Mars. To get there, we'll need sustainable sources of food, medicines and materials.

As researchers who work on engineering plants to produce such resources in space, we sometimes get asked: "why?". With issues such as climate change, inequality, global pandemics and environmental degradation, shouldn't we be focused on Earth, not Mars?

But science can do both. And space research has a long history of not only satisfying the human instinct of exploration, but delivering transformational new inventions as we make discoveries along the way.

Plants not just for space

When the results of scientific research flow into the real world in practical ways, this is known as "research translation".

These translations are often unexpected and unpredictable. For example, NASA's need for compact, lightweight imaging technology in space led to the invention of the compact camera sensors we now have in smartphones, webcams, medical devices and more.

That shiny, reflective material used to deflect heat from buildings, appliances or even your car windshield? It's an insulation technology perfected by NASA to protect spacecraft and astronauts from temperature fluctuations in space.

Within the next decade, we could see "space plants" directly and indirectly improving life on Earth. So what might space-ready plants look like and how could they benefit those of us who never leave Earth?

Flavour and nutrition

Plants nourish us and support our mental wellbeing, but this alone won't sustain long-term space travel.

The modern space food menu largely consists of processed, long-life foods shipped along for the ride or delivered as cargo to the International Space Station. Anything fresh needs to be produced on the spot and farming animals isn't an option.

To create a balanced space diet without the need to take dietary supplements, researchers have been developing nutritionally complete plant-based foods that have large quantities of high-quality protein. These will be pick-and-eat plants that can be grown and processed in space, and will provide an optimal balance of essential amino acids. They also include non-essential amino acids normally found in animals, such as taurine and creatine.

Improving plants in this way could help reshape agriculture on Earth, as plant-based diets are more sustainable for a planet facing a climate crisis and reduce global nutrient inequity.

To create a balanced space diet without the need to take supplements, researchers have been developing nutritionally complete plant-based foods that have large quantities of high-quality protein **PHOTO: NASA**

Scientists are also researching plant-based food flavours and textures to address the common complaint from astronauts about "menu fatigue". For decades, astronauts have reported their sense of taste is dulled in space, making spicy foods a station favourite.

Environmental resistance

Space plants must also thrive in an unfamiliar environment. On Earth, plants rely on gravity to know which way to grow their roots and which way to grow their shoots. This is a process called gravitropism.

In space, gravitropism is confused, causing roots to grow in random directions because of the effects of microgravity on hormone signalling. Research efforts are ongoing to determine the effects of microgravity on plant growth.

For example, water is "sticky" – it clumps together because molecules in water are attracted to each other, rather than pulled downwards into a puddle. In the absence of gravity, this results in sticky blobs of water that cling to surfaces such as plant roots and don't flow anywhere because they're held together by surface tension.

- Sometime in the 2040s, humans may well reach a new frontier – Mars. To get there, we'll need sustainable sources of food, medicines and materials.

Furthermore, a lack of gravity also disrupts convection – it prevents gases from naturally mixing in water. This would limit oxygen availability to the roots of plants and result in low oxygen, also known as hypoxia stress.

Plant hypoxia also happens due to flooding during high rainfall and soil waterlogging. Engineering plants to tolerate microgravity-induced hypoxia will generate data for improving flood resistance in crops on Earth, reducing agricultural losses.

More than food

On a Moon or Mars base, colonists wouldn't be able to wait for months or years to resupply essential resources such as medicines or construction materials. So, space plants are being designed to provide more than just food.

Plants have been engineered to produce proteins that elicit immune responses and act as edible vaccines.

On Earth, many pharmaceuticals are produced and extracted from microbes. Plants can be engineered to produce medicinal compounds or building material precursors in similar ways, but these compounds are likely to negatively impact plant growth.

The ability to engineer plants to produce different chemicals in response to environmental cues would allow astronauts to switch plants from making food to making medicine – perhaps with the literal flick of a switch.

Genetic "circuits" responding to light and chemical signals are being developed, too. These have the potential to make crops more readily able to adapt to the stresses of a changing climate.

When innovations need to overcome extreme limitations – such as the environment of space – they can speed up and lead to solutions we wouldn't otherwise come up with.

The race to land on the Moon led to the development of many everyday items. Now, we're on the verge of a new biotechnological revolution, getting ready to boldly grow where no plant has grown before.

—The Conversation

Taliban govt accuses Pak of airstrikes in Afg

ISLAMABAD, 29 AUG

Afghanistan's Taliban government has accused neighbouring Pakistan of carrying out airstrikes in Nangarhar and Khost provinces, killing at least three people and injuring seven. The attacks, reportedly by Pakistani drones, also damaged several homes, officials said. Kabul's foreign ministry condemned the strikes as a "provocative act" and summoned Pakistan's ambassador, warning such actions would "fuel hatred" between the two countries. Pakistan has yet to comment. The alleged strikes come amid rising tensions, with Islamabad accusing Kabul of harbouring Pakistani Taliban, blamed for attacks in Pakistan. Afghanistan denies the claim. The incident follows recent closer anti-terror cooperation between Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Indian-origin man joins Singapore President's council

SINGAPORE, 29 AUG

Indian-origin banker Piyush Gupta has been appointed as an Alternate Member of the Council of Presidential Advisers (CPA) in Singapore for a four-year term. The appointment was made by President Tharman Shanmugaratnam on the advice of Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, the President's Office announced on Thursday. Gupta, 65, originally from Meerut, is now a Singapore citizen. He holds a BA (Hons) in Economics from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, and a PG Diploma in Management from IIM Ahmedabad. Gupta served as CEO and Director of DBS Group from 2009 to March 2025, leading its major transformation and expanding its footprint, including establishing DBS Bank in India. *—PTI*

Imran's nephew sent to jail for 2023 riots

LAHORE, 29 AUG

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Thursday sent Shershah Khan, nephew of PTI founder Imran Khan, to jail on judicial remand over the Jinnah House attack during the May 2023 riots, Dawn reported. Shershah, son of Aleema Khan, was arrested on 22 August outside his home. His brother Shahrez was detained a day earlier on similar charges. After completing a five-day physical remand, Shershah was produced before ATC Judge Manzer Ali Gill amid tight security. The prosecution sought a 30-day remand, but the defence argued the arrest was politically motivated. Judge Gill denied both pleas, noting a baton was recovered but remand wasn't required. *—ANI*

Two more Sri Lankan politicians arrested

COLOMBO, 28 AUG

Two prominent Sri Lankan politicians, Rajitha Senaratne and Athuraliye Rathana, were arrested after surrendering at local courts on Friday, furthering the crackdown on corruption in the country. These arrests follow the recent detention of former president Ranil Wickremesinghe on similar allegations. Senaratne, a former fisheries minister, has been charged with awarding a dubious contract to a Korean company for sand dredging in 2013, causing significant government losses. Rathana, a former Buddhist monk and parliamentarian, had evaded arrest related to 2020 abduction of fellow monk Vedinigama Wimalathissa, who claimed Rathana attempted to force his signature for political gain. Both were remanded by the court, with Senaratne till 9 September and Rathana till 12 September. *—PTI*

Israel dubs Gaza's largest city dangerous combat zone

IDF halts humanitarian pauses for distributing aid

GAZA CITY, 29 AUG

Israel's military has suspended mid-day pauses to fighting, which had allowed the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza City, saying on Friday that the city was now "a dangerous combat zone."

The city was among the places that Israel paused fighting last month to allow food and aid supplies to enter from 10am to 8pm. The "tactical pauses" applied to Gaza City, Deir al-Balah and Muwasi, where hundreds of thousands of displaced people are sheltering.

Israel's military did not say whether they had notified residents or aid groups.

The suspension came as Israel prepared to widen its offensive in the city, days after it reported strikes in key neighbourhoods and called up tens of thousands of reservists.

The city also is home to some of the territory's critical infrastructure and health facilities. The UN said the besieged Strip could lose half of its hospital bed capacity if Israel invades as planned.

The suspension of the pause also comes one week after the world's leading food security authority declared Gaza City was being gripped by famine, due to Israel's blockade. An official declaration of famine is rare and a highly technical classification.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said famine in Gaza is "a present-day catastrophe" and the start of expanded Israeli military operations present "a new and dangerous phase."

"Gaza is piled with rubble, piled with bodies, and piled with examples of what may be serious violations of international law," he said.

UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, said the looming offensive could further displace 1 million people, including many who were previously displaced. *—Agencies*

Israel said it recover the bodies of 2 hostages.

51 people were killed by Israel in Gaza on Friday.

The city was among the places that Israel paused fighting last month to allow food and aid supplies to enter from 10am to 8pm

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

1ST SUCH ATTACK

Russia sinks Ukraine's largest naval ship

KYIV/BRUSSELS, 29 AUG

Ukraine's largest naval reconnaissance ship, the Simferopol, has been sunk in a Russian sea drone strike, marking a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict. The Russian Defence Ministry reported that the Laguna-class vessel was hit in the River Danube delta, situated within Ukraine's Odessa Region.

This incident marks the first successful use of a sea drone against a Ukrainian Navy ship, with the attack resulting in one crew member's death and several others injured. Ukrainian authorities confirmed the ship's sinking and stated that search efforts for missing sailors are underway.

In a related development, European defence ministers convened in Copenhagen following a Russian air assault on Kyiv that left 23 dead. Outraged officials pledged to increase pressure on Moscow through sanctions and military support for Ukraine. Kaja Kallas, EU foreign policy chief, emphasised the need for heightened sanctions, stating, "Everybody understands that the only thing that works is pressure."

The EU has summoned Russia's envoy over the Kyiv airstrike, while the US approved an $825 million arms sale to bolster Ukraine's defences. Lithuanian Defence Minister Dovile Šakaliene dismissed hopes for peace, calling for a more forceful European response, including seizing frozen Russian assets. *—Agencies*

- This incident marks the first successful use of a sea drone against a Ukrainian Navy ship, with the attack resulting in one crew member's death

Vance ready to be POTUS if 'tragedy' strikes

WASHINGTON, 29 AUG

US Vice President JD Vance indicated that he would take over as the President if a "tragedy" strikes.

Vance, 41, who is among the youngest Vice Presidents to have served in the US, told USA Today that his current role has prepared him to take over Trump's office if a tragedy struck.

"God forbid there's a terrible tragedy, I can't think of better on-the-job training than what I've gotten over the last 200 days," Vance said.

The comments come amid speculations about President Donald Trump's health, after a large bruise was seen on the President's hand during his recent meeting with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung at the Oval Office. At 79, Trump is the oldest President to take office.

Vance remarked that Trump was in "incredibly good health" and added that he expects the President to serve a full term.

Trump said earlier this month that Vance is the most likely heir to his MAGA movement, but Vance continued to brush off speculation about his 2028 plans.

Vance said that along with his wife, Usha, his is focused on the job he has right now. "And if that door opens later on, we'll figure it out then." *—ANI with Agencies*

- "God forbid there's a terrible tragedy, I can't think of better on-the-job training than what I've gotten over the last 200 days," US Vice President JD Vance said

Fed official sues Trump after he fired her

Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook has sued the Trump administration in an effort to overturn the President's attempt to fire her, launching an unprecedented legal battle that could reshape the Fed's longstanding political independence. The lawsuit seeks an emergency injunction to block her firing.

Trump to address UN on 23 Sept

Trump will visit New York next month to take part in the 80th UN General Assembly, the White House said. Trump addressed the UNGA multiple times during his first term. In 2017, Trump made his debut at UNGA, where he said that the US might "destroy North Korea" if provoked and called leader Kim Jong-un "Rocket Man".

'Denver school all-gender loos are discrimination'

The Education Department said that Denver Public Schools violated Title IX protections against sex-based discrimination in education by creating all-gender bathrooms and allowing students to use bathrooms corresponding to their gender identity. The finding followed a probe of Denver's East High School.

US seeks UN nod for gang task force in Haiti

The US announced Thursday that it is seeking UN authorisation for a new "Gang Suppression Force" to help tackle the escalating violence in Haiti, where armed groups are expanding their brutal activities from the capital into the countryside.

CDC gets new Acting Director after Don fires Chief

Jim O'Neill, a top deputy to Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr, will reportedly serve as Acting Director of the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, shortly after Susan Monarez was fired for not agreeing with Trump's anti-vaccine mandates.

Wife of ousted South Korean ex-prez indicted

SEOUL, 29 AUG

South Korea's political landscape has been shaken as Kim Keon Hee, the wife of jailed ex-president Yoon Suk Yeol, and former prime minister Han Duck-soo have been indicted. This follows Yoon's controversial martial law declaration on 3 December, 2024, intended to push his agenda through an opposition-dominated legislature, which resulted in significant instability.

Yoon was impeached and removed from office in April, with a new government appointing special prosecutors to investigate the martial law and corruption claims during his presidency.

Kim is accused of breaching financial market and political funding laws, while Han faces charges of abetting the martial law declaration, falsifying documents, and lying under oath.

Assistant Special Counsel Park Ji-young stated, "Han was the highest official who could have blocked Yoon's attempt to impose martial law," while Han contended he opposed the plan. Kim has expressed regret for the public concern but plans to "quietly attend the trials," claiming media reports present suspicions as "confirmed fact." Meanwhile, dozens of others have been investigated or arrested over related allegations. *—PTI*

Myanmar labels KNU as terrorist

BANGKOK, 29 AUG

Myanmar's military government designated Karen National Union (KNU) a terrorist group on Thursday, making illegal virtually any activities connected with the major ethnic rebel group, including contact by third parties.

The KNU has been fighting for greater autonomy since Myanmar became independent from Britain in 1948. The group, located in southeast, has been engaged in fierce combat against the army in the civil war that followed the military takeover from Myanmar's elected government in 2021.

KNU spokesperson Padoh Saw Taw Nee said the group would not care about the designation. Noting that Myanmar's military had been indicted by international tribunals, Nee said: "You don't even need to prove anything on who the real terrorists and international criminals are, and who the unlawful association are."

KNU has vowed to disrupt the national elections the military plans to hold beginning 28 December, but the terrorist designation will make it more difficult to do even nonviolent information campaigns.

Minority groups living in borders, have struggled for decades for greater autonomy from Myanmar's central government.

KNU, along with seven other ethnic rebel armies, signed a ceasefire agreement in 2015 with the former quasi-civilian government led by former general Thein Sein to end more than six decades of fighting. However, the group became allies with pro-democracy militias formed after the military seized power in 2021. *—PTI*

BANGLADESH JAILS 16, INCLUDING WAR VETERANS, FOR TERRORISM

DHAKA, 28 AUG

A Dhaka court has ordered the imprisonment of 16 individuals, including several veterans of Bangladesh's 1971 Liberation War and a university professor, under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

The verdict followed an incident on Thursday where a mob disrupted a public discussion organised by the newly-formed veterans' group 'Moncho 71' in Dhaka. Among those remanded are former minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Dhaka University law professor Hafizur Rahman Curzon, and journalist Manjurul Alam Panna.

Most of the detainees are in their seventies. The gathering was intended to promote the legacy of the 1971 war, Bangladesh's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and national values. However, chaos erupted as 25 men, identified as 'July warriors,' assaulted the attendees accusing them of supporting the former Awami League government. *—PTI*

'FRIENDLY WITH CAMBODIAN LEADER'

Thai PM sacked over leaked call

BANGKOK, 29 AUG

Thailand's Constitutional Court on Friday dismissed Paetongtarn Shinawatra from her position as Prime Minister, ruling that as the country's leader she violated constitutional rules on ethics in a phone call with Cambodia's Senate President Hun Sen.

The ruling means she immediately loses her job, which she had held for about a year. Paetongtarn was suspended from her duties on 1 July when the court agreed to hear the case against her, and Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai took over her responsibilities.

The Cabinet led by Phumtham is expected to stay in place on a caretaker basis until Parliament approves a new Prime Minister. The caretaker Cabinet could also dissolve Parliament and call a new election.

Paetongtarn's leaked 15 June call with Hun Sen was aimed at easing tensions over competing claims to territory along their border, but sparked outrage in Thailand because Paetongtarn seemed overly friendly in discussing a matter of national security and appeared to malign a Thai army general. In the call, she called Hun Sen "uncle" and referred to a Thai military commander as her "opponent".

The court said that Paetongtarn possessed a "personal relationship" that "appeared to align with Cambodia".

Notably, Hun Sen is an old ally of her father, former prime minister billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra, who had been ousted in a military coup during his second term. Paetongtarn's family is powerful in Thailand's politics.

However, she is the fourth member of her family to be sacked from government office, and the fifth prime minister to be removed since 2008.

Cambodia and Thailand also had a brief war in July which resulted in at least 32 casualties. *— Agencies*

Paetongtarn Shinawatra, 39, was sworn in as the youngest Thai PM

PHOTO: X

Minneapolis shooter had mental illness

MINNEAPOLIS, 29 AUG

The shooter who opened fire at a Minneapolis church, killing two children and injuring 15 others, had once attended the Annunciation Catholic School and was a former parish member, according to Police Chief Brian O'Hara. The assailant, 23-year-old **Robin Westman**, died by suicide after the attack. Investigators found extensive writings detailing grievances, with a disturbing note stating, "I know this is wrong, but I can't seem to stop myself."

Among the wounded, one child remains in critical condition. Parents of the victims, Fletcher Merkel, 8, and Harper Moyski, 10, expressed their heartbreak, urging community action against gun violence.

Harper's parents said, "No family should ever have to endure this kind of pain," while Fletcher's father called for remembrance of his son for the joy he brought.

Witnesses recounted moments of bravery from teachers and children during the chaos.

O'Hara praised their actions, noting, "There are countless lessons of bravery from young children all the way up to elders." *—Agencies*

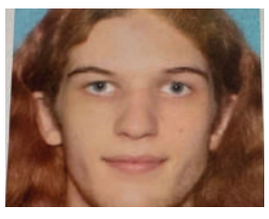

PHOTO: PTI

Gold hits fresh all-time high of Rs 1,03,670/10g

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

Gold prices rallied Rs 2,100 to hit a fresh all-time high of Rs 1,03,670 per 10g in the national capital on Friday due to persistent buying by stockists and depreciation in rupee, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,01,570 per 10g on Thursday. Continuing the upside momentum for the fourth straight session, gold of 99.5 per cent purity surged Rs 2,100 to hit a new lifetime high of Rs 1,03,100 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday, a day after settling at Rs 1,01,000 per 10g. In the overseas markets, spot gold was trading flat at USD 3,407.39 per ounce in New York. *—PTI*

Rupee closes at all-time low of 88.19 against USD

MUMBAI, 29 AUG

The rupee breached the 88-mark for the first time and closed at an all-time low of 88.19 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, registering a sharp decline of 61 paise amid heightened Indo-US trade deal tensions. Forex traders said the rupee is under persistent pressure amid the imposition of steep tariffs by the US compounded with persistent foreign fund outflows and month-end dollar demand.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 87.73 against the US dollar, then lost ground and fell to an intra-day low of 88.33. The domestic unit settled for the day at an all-time low of 88.19 (provisional) against the greenback, registering a sharp fall of 61 paise over its previous close. *—PTI*

FM vows protection for exporters amid US tariffs

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

A delegation from the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday seeking support after the United States raised tariffs on Indian goods. Led by President SC Ralhan and Vice President Ravikant Kapur, the delegation highlighted concerns over market access, competitiveness and jobs in export-driven sectors. Ralhan urged the government to implement quick, targeted policy measures to cushion the impact, stressing exporters' role in driving growth and employment. Minister assured full government backing, promising measures to protect exporters' interests and safeguard workers' livelihoods amid global challenges. FIEO said minister's reassurance was a "great source of confidence" and pledged to work closely with government. *—ANI*

Tea board imposes strict standards ahead of auctions

KOLKATA, 29 AUG

The Tea Board has announced that teas failing to meet the specifications of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will be withdrawn from auctions prior to sale. In a new circular, Board stated that, according to Tea Control Order of 2003, manufacturers must ensure their products adhere to FSSAI standards. Affected sellers will be required to approach the Board for the proper destruction of non-compliant crops. Additionally, all dust-grade teas produced annually must now be sold exclusively through auctions to enhance transparency and improve price discovery for compliant teas. Trade bodies like the Indian Tea Association and Tea Association of India have welcomed these measures, noting that dust grades represent about 20 per cent of North India's total tea production. *—PTI*

Tariffs on India result of Trump's anger: Jefferies

Trump reportedly hoped to mediate between India-Pak conflict

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

PHOTO: AI

The steep 50 per cent tariffs imposed by the United States on Indian goods are largely a result of President Donald Trump's "personal pique" at not being allowed to mediate in the India-Pakistan conflict, according to a recent report by American multinational investment bank and financial services company Jefferies.

The report said the American president had reportedly hoped to intervene following the four-day military conflict between the two countries in May.

India has consistently maintained that it does not accept third-party intervention in its conflicts with Pakistan.

Jefferies pointed out that this "red line" was upheld despite the heavy economic costs, effectively denying the 47th American president one of his opportunities to strengthen his international standing and potentially seek recognition such as the Nobel Peace Prize.

Another sticking point is agriculture. The report highlighted that no Indian government, including the current one, is willing to open up the agriculture sector to imports because of the severe consequences it would have on millions of people.

According to Jefferies, the draconian tariffs now imposed on India are also tied to a wider chain of events. Trump has not been able to end the Ukraine conflict as he had promised, and India's continued purchases of Russian oil have become an added issue in Washington.

However, the report stressed that the underlying cause remains India's refusal to allow Trump's personal intervention in the Pakistan issue.

The Jefferies analysis further described the development as a "classic example" of a "conceptual vacuum" in Washington, warning that such decisions are not aligned with US' national interests. Pushing India away risks bringing it closer to China, it cautioned, pointing to the resumption of direct flights between the two countries as early as September after more than five years. *—ANI*

India's shrimp exports decline by 15-18%: Crisil

MUMBAI, 29 AUG

India's shrimp export volumes are projected to decline by 15-18% this fiscal year following the United States' decision to raise import tariffs on the commodity to 58.26 per cent as of 27 August. A report from Crisil Ratings indicates this will result in decreased revenues, which have been stagnant for the past four financial years, expected to fall by 18-20 per cent year-on-year. In FY25, India exported approximately USD 5 billion in shrimp,.

The heightened tariff places Indian exporters at a competitive disadvantage compared to nations like Ecuador and Vietnam, where tariffs are significantly lower. While Indian processors may seek alternative markets such as the UK, China, and Russia, the report warns that the overall impact will lead to reduced operating margins and weakened credit profiles for companies reliant on the US market. *—PTI*

2,187 STOCKS DECLINE

Investors lose Rs 11.21L crore in just 3 days

MUMBAI, 29 AUG

Market investors became poorer by Rs 11.21 lakh crore in three days of selling pressure, where the benchmark Sensex tumbled 1,826 points.

In the past three trading days, the BSE benchmark has plummeted 1,826.26 points or 2.23 per cent.

On Friday, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 270.92 points or 0.34 per cent to settle at 79,809.65. During the day, it declined 338.81 points or 0.42 per cent to 79,741.76.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 11,21,459.36 crore to Rs 4,43,65,504.09 crore (USD 5.05 trillion) in three days.

"The Sensex ended Friday's trade on a subdued note, slipping 270.92 points to close at 79,809.65 as persistent concerns over US tariffs on Indian exports weighed on investor sentiment and kept foreign inflows under pressure," Vikram Kasat, Head - Advisory at PL Capital, said.

From the Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra fell by 2.96 per cent, followed by Reliance Industries, which lost 2.21 per cent.

Infosys, NTPC, Tata Motors and Tech Mahindra were also among the laggards.

However, ITC, Bharat Electronics, Trent, and Larsen & Toubro were among the major gainers.

The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.41 per cent and the smallcap index dipped 0.29 per cent.

BSE FMCG, industrials, capital goods, consumer durables and power were the gainers.

As many as 2,187 stocks declined while 1,890 advanced and 160 remained unchanged on the BSE. *—PTI*

Jefferies says GST cut likely to drive domestic auto demand

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

PHOTO: FREEPIK

India's automobile industry is expected to witness a significant boost in demand as optimism grows over a possible reduction in Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates, according to a recent report by Jefferies. The government is likely to announce a tax rationalisation package early next month, with two-wheelers (2Ws) and small passenger vehicles (PVs) anticipated benefiting the most.

The proposal includes lowering GST rates from 28 per cent to 18 per cent for most vehicles and from 12 per cent to 5 per cent for tractors. This could reduce on-road prices by 6–8 per cent, substantially improving affordability and supporting demand recovery. Two-wheelers, currently taxed at 28–31 per cent, and sub-4 metre cars, taxed at around 29–31 per cent, stand to gain the most. Large SUVs, presently taxed at 45–50 per cent, may also see some relief with effective rates potentially falling to around 40 per cent.

Tractors could benefit from a reduced GST of 5 per cent, though Jefferies warns this might create an inverted duty structure due to higher input costs. Hybrid vehicles could also receive a demand boost if GST rates are rationalised closer to those of battery electric vehicles (BEVs), which attract only 5 per cent GST.

Jefferies has raised its FY26–28 industry volume estimates for 2Ws and PVs by 2–6 per cent, forecasting a 10 per cent CAGR for two-wheelers and 8 per cent CAGR for PVs. Tractor sales are projected to grow at a 9 per cent CAGR, while trucks may see slower growth at 3 per cent.

Muted demand in recent months is expected to pick up during the festive season, supported by the potential GST cuts, easing liquidity, and recent income tax reductions. *—ANI*

Ex-RBI guv Urjit Patel appointed as IMF's ED

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

The government has approved the appointment of former Reserve Bank Governor **Urjit Patel** as Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a period of three years.

He would replace KV Subramanian, whose services were terminated by the government six months ahead of his three-year tenure. The termination took effect on 30 April, 2025.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Urjit Patel, economist and former RBI governor, to the post of Executive Director (ED) at the IMF, for a period of three years with effect from the date of assumption of charge of the post, or until further orders, a government order dated 28 August, 2025, said.

Prior to this appointment, Patel served as Vice President for Investment Operations (Region 1) at the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Sources said he resigned from his position in January 2024 due to family health matters.

Patel took over as the 24th Governor of the RBI in 2016, succeeding Raghuram Rajan.Born in 1963, he also served as a Consultant to the Ministry of Finance from 1998 to 2001. *—PTI*

Adani Power to invest $3B in Bihar's new thermal plant

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

AAdani Power on Friday said it has received the Letter of Award (LoA) to set up a 2,400 MW greenfield thermal power plant with an investment of USD 3 billion at Pirpainti in Bhagalpur district of Bihar.

In a statement, Adani Power said it has received the LoA for 25-year long-term procurement of electricity from Bihar State Power Generation Company Ltd (BSPGCL), which it will supply from a 2,400 MW (800 MW X 3) greenfield ultra super critical plant to be set up at Pirpainti.

This would be followed by the signing of the Power Supply Agreement (PSA) between the entities, it stated.

The Bihar State Power Generation Company Ltd (BSPGCL) has awarded the LoA to Adani Power on behalf of North Bihar Power Distribution Company Ltd (NBPDCL) and South Bihar Power Distribution Company Ltd (SBPDCL), the two state utilities.

Earlier, Adani Power had emerged as the winner in the tariff-based competitive bidding process by the BSPGCL, offering the lowest supply price of Rs 6.075 per KWh.

The company will invest USD 3 billion in setting up the plant and the related infrastructure.

The project is expected to generate direct and indirect employment of 10,000 to 12,000 personnel during the construction phase and 3,000 once in operation. *—PTI*

Paytm clarifies on Google Play's recent UPI alert

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

Paytm has clarified that Google Play's recent notification on UPI handle changes was incomplete and may have created confusion.

The company emphasised that there is no disruption to UPI payments on Paytm, and both consumer and merchant transactions remain seamless.

The update is relevant only for recurring payments such as subscription billing. "This means that if a user was paying for YouTube Premium or Google One storage or to any recurring platform through Paytm UPI, they will simply need to change their old @paytm handle to the new handle linked to their bank, which is @pthdfc, @ptaxis, @ptyes or @ptsbi," Paytm explained.

For example, if a UPI ID was abcd@paytm, it will now be abcd@pthdfc (or as per the bank). One-time UPI payments are not impacted and continue as usual.

Paytm noted that this transition is part of its migration to new UPI handles, following approval from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to operate as a Third Party Application Provider (TPAP). The deadline to complete the update for recurring mandates is 31 August 2025, which is why Google Play issued its alert.

Reassuring customers, Paytm stated that this is a simple update to ensure uninterrupted recurring payments, while all other UPI transactions on the app continue without any change. *—ANI*

Govt to soon bring measures to boost exports, says Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Commerce and Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal** on Friday said the government will soon introduce measures to support exports and domestic consumption after the United States imposed a 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods from 27 August.

Addressing an industry event, Goyal assured exporters of full government backing to counter the impact of these unilateral actions. He noted that labour-intensive sectors such as shrimp, chemicals, leather and footwear are likely to be the worst affected and urged businesses to identify vulnerable sectors and seek alternative markets.

Goyal revealed that the commerce ministry, through Indian Missions abroad, is working to diversify exports and explore new global opportunities. He added that the upcoming GST Council meeting next week is expected to unveil measures aimed at stimulating domestic demand and providing a significant boost to the manufacturing sector.

- Expressing confidence in India's resilience, Goyal said the country's exports in 2024-25 are set to exceed last year's record USD 825 billion

Expressing confidence in India's resilience, Goyal said the country's exports in 2024-25 are set to exceed last year's record USD 825 billion. He stressed that India will never bow to trade discrimination and will continue capturing new markets.

Goyal also invited Indian firms to tap into opportunities in Australia's housing sector, which requires about one million homes, offering scope for financial collaboration and workforce participation. *—PTI*

'AI IS LIKE DIVINE COW'

Reliance announces new AI subsidiary; pacts with Google, Meta

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

PHOTO: ANI

Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani on Friday announced the formation of a new wholly-owned subsidiary, Reliance Intelligence, that will house large-scale AI infrastructure, and also unveiled new partnerships with global tech titans Meta and Google, as the company outlined its vision of AI for everyone and everywhere.

Reliance Intelligence will build gigawatt-scale, AI-ready data centres, powered by green energy and engineered for training and inference at a national scale, Ambani said at the company's AGM.

Ambani also announced high-voltage partnerships with Meta and Google at the RIL AGM, which saw separate addresses by Founder and CEO of Meta, Mark Zuckerberg and CEO of Alphabet & Google Sundar Pichai.

"A decade ago, digital services became a new growth engine for Reliance. Now, the opportunity before us with AI is just as large, if not larger. Jio promised and delivered digital everywhere and for every Indian. Similarly, Reliance Intelligence promises to deliver AI everywhere for every Indian," Ambani said.

Reliance Intelligence is conceived with four clear missions: to house India's next-generation AI infrastructure, to house global partnerships, to build AI services for India, and to foster AI talent, he said.

> **Because of the miraculous power, AI can now be called the new Kamdhenu, the divine wish-fulfilling cow of our age**
>
> -Mukesh Ambani, Reliance Industries Chairman

Reliance Intelligence will also cater to global partnerships, bringing together tech titans from across the world to open-source communities.

RIL also announced an India-focused AI joint venture with tech giant Meta that will build and scale AI solutions for enterprises in India and select international markets.

RIL also announced a partnership with Google for AI under which they will set up AI-ready data centres. *—PTI*

JIO TO LAUNCH IPO IN FIRST HALF OF 2026: MUKESH AMBANI

NEW DELHI, 29 AUG

Reliance Jio will launch its initial public offering in the first half of 2026, Reliance Industries Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani said on Friday.

Addressing the 48th Annual General Meeting of RIL, Ambani announced that Jio will now expand its operations overseas and develop its own artificial intelligence technology.

"...Jio is making all arrangements to file for its IPO. We are aiming to list Jio by the first half of 2026, subject to all necessary approvals...this will demonstrate that Jio is capable of creating the same quantum of value as our global counterparts," he said.

Ambani said that Jio has now surpassed the 500 million subscriber mark. *—PTI*

ASC: Manini Kaushik bags 50m rifle prone bronze

NEW DELHI, 30 OCT

Young Indian shooter Manini Kaushik clinched her maiden individual international medal, bagging a bronze in the women's 50m rifle prone event after guiding the team to silver in the Asian Shooting Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, on Friday. The 24-year-old from Jaipur, who also competes in the 50m rifle 3 positions event, shot 617.8 to claim the individual bronze. The South Korean duo of Hana Im (620.2) and Eunseo Lee (620.2) took the gold and silver, respectively. Manini had finished fifth in the competition, but since two of the shooters ahead of her, South Korea's Yelin Choi (620.1) and India's Sift Kaur Samra (617.9), were competing in the 'Ranking Points Only' (RPO) category, the Jaipur shooter took the bronze. *—PTI*

India submits proposal to host 2030 CWG

LONDON, 30 AUG

India on Friday officially submitted its proposal to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games, marking a significant step in its ambition to bring the multi-sport event back to the country after two decades. The formal bid was submitted to the Commonwealth Sport (the Commonwealth Games Federation) by a delegation with representation from the Commonwealth Games Association of India and the Government of Gujarat. The bid positions Ahmedabad as the host city for the Centenary edition of the Games, marking 100 years of the Commonwealth Games. Gujarat Sports Minister Harsh Sanghavi said India's Games will be based on the ancient principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', meaning the world is one family.*—PTI*

Pak hockey team set to face India at neutral venues

PHOTO: PTI

KARACHI, 30 AUG

The Pakistan hockey team will be a part of the upcoming seventh season of the men's FIH Pro League, opening up the possibility of clashes with India at a neutral venue during the tournament that is traditionally played in a home-and-away format.Besides India, Pakistan will join Argentina, Australia, Belgium, England, Germany,, Netherlands, and Spain in the upcoming season for which a detailed schedule is still awaited.

Pakistan were promoted through the FIH Hockey Nations Cup played in Malaysia earlier this year. New Zealand won that event by beating Pakistan in the final, but later indicated that they "would not proceed with the invitation to join Pro League this time." "Therefore, as stipulated in the regulations, FIH extended the invitation to the runners-up, namely Pakistan, who have confirmed their participation," the world body stated in a press release. The Indian government recently came up with a dedicated sports policy with regards to Pakistan under which it banned any bilateral engagement with the neighbouring country due to the border tensions that have been reignited by the Pahalgam terror attack in April. No Pakistani team will be allowed to land in India for bilateral sports, and likewise, no Indian team will travel there. "As per government directive, there will be no bilateral sporting ties with Pakistan, but we will have to play them in international tournaments. Now that Pakistan is included in the 2025-26 Pro League, we will play them at a neutral venue, which is yet to be decided. Pakistan can't travel to India," a Hockey India source told PTI on Friday.

The Pakistani team recently decided against travelling to India for the Asia Cup that began in Rajgir, Bihar, on Friday, citing security concerns. *—PTI*

Harmanpreet's hat-trick helps India beat China

Penalty corner hat-trick propelled India to 4-3 victory

RAJGIR, 30 AUG

Harmanpreet Singh *PHOTO: ANI*

India's men's hockey team started its Asia Cup 2025 campaign with a narrow 4-3 win over China in Rajgir on Friday.

The home side fell behind in the opening quarter when Du Shihao converted a penalty corner in the 12th minute. India squandered the chance to go level towards the end of the opening quarter, with captain Harmanpreet Singh sending his drag-flick wide.

But Jugraj Singh did not miss when offered the chance, scoring on the board with his drag-flick in the 18th minute. Just two minutes later, Harmanpreet doubled India's advantage, firing a penalty corner into the right corner from the second battery. Harmanpreet added to his tally with another penalty corner conversion, giving India breathing room with a 3-1 advantage.

Chen Benhai, though, made sure China pulled back in the contest when his drag-flick beat the Indian custodian Krishan Pathak. Harmanpreet then missed a penalty stroke, leaving the window open for China to restore parity. In the 42nd minute, Gao Jiesheng made the most of a short corner to level the scores 3-3.

But the Indian captain completed his hat-trick when he converted from the short corner for a third time, getting India over the line in a hard-fought contest.

Malaysia came from a goal down to crush lower-ranked Bangladesh 4-1 before title holders Korea thrashed Chinese Taipei 7-0 in Pool B matches of the men's Asia Cup hockey tournament, here on Friday.

In the second match of Pool B, Dain Son (17th, 29th, and 58th minute) slammed a hat-trick, Jihun Yang (27th, 50th) struck twice from penalty corners before Seyong Oh (53rd) added another from a field effort. Korea pumped in two more goals through Yoonho Kong (54th) and Son in the final minutes of the match to register a dominating win.

Earlier in the opening match of the tournament, Malaysia, ranked 12th in the world, scored three field goals through Ashran Hamsani (25th minute), Akhimullah Anuar (36th), and Muhajir Abdul Rauf (48th), before Syed Cholan (54th) struck from a penalty corner.

However, it was 29th-ranked Bangladesh who took the lead against the run of play in the 16th minute when Ashraful Islam converted a penalty corner. *—PTI*

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sindhu's 6th medal bid ends in agony

PARIS, 30 AUG

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu's quest for a sixth World Championships medal ended on Friday after losing a hard-fought three-game quarterfinal thriller to Indonesia's Putri Kusuma Wardani.

Sindhu, the 2019 world champion and five-time medallist at the event, was eyeing a record sixth podium finish but faltered at the finishing line, losing 14-21 21-13 16-21 to ninth seed Wardani in a pulsating 64-minute contest.

Earlier in the day, the Indian mixed doubles pair of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto bowed out after losing 15-21, 13-21 to world No. 4 Malaysians Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei, ending India's hopes of a maiden mixed doubles medal at the showpiece.

PV Sindhu *PHOTO: PTI*

Sindhu, the 30-year-old from Hyderabad, had won her maiden medal in Guangzhou in 2013. She added another bronze in Copenhagen a year later to her tally, finished runner-up in Glasgow (2017) and Nanjing (2018), before scripting history with gold at Basel in 2019.

Sindhu, the only Indian to win Olympic medals in consecutive Games, silver at Rio 2016 and bronze at Tokyo 2020, has endured a difficult run since lifting the 2022 Commonwealth Games crown. The Singapore Open that year was her last notable title. Injuries, a slide in rankings, and frequent coaching changes have stifled her rhythm in the buildup to the Paris Olympics, where her dream of a third Olympic medal ended prematurely.

Training under Indonesian coach Muhammad, she has continued to search for consistency on the tour, but results have remained elusive. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@JOSE

Mourinho leaves Fenerbahce after CL qualification failure

ISTANBUL, 30 AUG

Jose Mourinho left his role as coach of Fenerbahce on Friday, two days after failing to qualify the Turkish club for the Champions League. Fenerbahce was eliminated by Benfica in the playoff round after a 1-0 loss on Wednesday. The 62-year-old Mourinho, one of the world's most famous coaches, had been in charge of Fenerbahce since June of last year. "We have parted ways with Mourinho," Fenerbahce said on its X and Instagram accounts. We thank him for his efforts for our team and wish him success in his future career.*—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@LYLES

Diamond League Final: Lyles beats Tebogo in 200m race

SYDNEY, 30 OCT

Noah Lyles warmed up for the upcoming athletics world championships by chasing down Olympic champion Letsile Tebogo to win the 200 metres at the Diamond League final on Thursday. Lyles trailed Tebogo at the start but gradually erased the deficit over the last 100 metres and pipped the Botswana sprinter to the line by inches. Lyles, the Olympic 100-metre champion and reigning world champion in both the 100 and 200, clocked 19.74 seconds in a slight headwind. Tebogo was 0.02 seconds behind. It was Lyles' sixth Diamond League title, a record for track athletes."Six, that's a big number, " Lyles said. "Shoot, that's another record on the list. *—PTI*

Nabi's hat-trick gives North Zone control

BENGALURU, 30 AUG

Pacers Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana produced lively spells while Aquib Nabi bagged a five-wicket haul, including a hat-trick, as North Zone bundled out East Zone for 230 to gain command on the second day of the Duleep Trophy quarterfinals here Friday.

Wicketkeeper batter Kanhaiya Wadhawan (76) made a fluent fifty as North, overnight 308/6, reached 405 all out, and, now, they lead by 183 runs after East's stutter against Nabi (5/28).The Asia Cup-bound Arshdeep and Rana showcased their game readiness with intense spells spread across three sessions on the day.

There might have been a little more focus on Arshdeep as he was playing a first-class match after October 2024. He was also making a comeback from an impact injury to his left thumb that he sustained during an intra-squad match at Beckenham, England, in July.But the left-arm pacer showed no sign of discomfort while bowling 17 overs on the day, marked with sustained hostility.

Of course, the largely overcast conditions and an increasingly two-paced pitch gave him appreciable assistance but Arshdeep moved the ball well and found an ideal fuller length instantly in the initial hour. *—PTI*

Aquib Nabi *PHOTO: PTI*

Veer Ahlawat recovers to 1-under after fog delay

MONTANA, 30 AUG

Veer Ahlawat made good use of the fog-enforced suspension of play to improve his position from 2-over to 1-under in the opening round of the Omega European Masters at Crans-sur-Sierre Golf Course in Crans-Montana on the DP World Tour, here on Friday. The Indian was lying tied 51st.

Shubhankar Sharma, who could not start on the opening day, began his campaign and was 1-over through 15 and will need a strong second round to end his streak of missed cuts. When the play was suspended on Thursday, Ahlawat had started the round and was placed at T-61 with a score of 2-over par after 12 holes. He returned in the morning and birdied three in a row from the 13th to the 15th to move under par.

Ahlawat started the day with three bogies in the first four holes before making a birdie on the eighth. *—PTI*

Indian lifters bag 7 medals at Commonwealth C'ships

AHMEDABAD, 30 AUG

Indian weightlifters bagged a rich haul of seven medals, including a silver and a bronze in the senior category, with rising star Sairaj Pardeshi grabbing the spotlight with a record-breaking gold on the fifth day of the Common wealth Weigh tlifting Championships here on Friday.

Reigning National Games champion Dilbag Singh settled for silver in the men's 94kg event with a total lift of 342kg (153kg snatch + 189kg clean and jerk).

The gold went to Malaysia's Mohammad Syahmi Bin Nor Ghazali, who edged past Dilbag with 343kg (150kg+193kg), while Australia's Oliver Saxton took bronze with 336kg (150kg+186kg).

Vanshita Verma took bronze in the senior women's 86kg division, lifting 222kg (95kg+127kg). Australia's Eileen Cikamatana bagged gold with 255kg (110kg+145kg), followed by New Zealand's Litia Nacagilevu, who managed 235kg (107kg+128kg) for a silver. *—PTI*

NATIONAL SPORTS DAY

WILL DHYAN CHAND EVER GET A BHARAT RATNA?

NEW DELHI, 30 AUG

His name adorns the country's highest sports award, his birthday, 29 August, is celebrated as National Sports Day, and many stadiums across India stand in his honour.

But despite all the appeals, RTIs, and public movements, the Bharat Ratna continues to elude the hockey wizard Major Dhyan Chand.

In 2021, the Centre renamed the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna as the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award. But many wonder why, despite the public sentiment, the country's highest civilian honour continues to elude the man who put Indian hockey on the world map.

Hockey India president and three-time Olympian Dilip Tirkey led a movement at Jantar Mantar in 2016 with this demand and also raised the matter in Parliament, but every attempt failed."Dhyanchand was the greatest player in the world in his time.

PHOTO: PTI

I always say that hockey is the sport which got us our first Olympic gold medals, and Major Dhyan Chand's contribution is incomparable," Tirkey told PTI Bhasha."If the country's biggest sports award is named after him, the National Stadium is named after him, then why not he is give him a Bharat Ratna?"Dhyan Chand, who was the architect of gold medals in three consecutive Olympics (Amsterdam 1928, Los Angeles 1932 and Berlin 1936), put India's strong presence on the world sports map for the first time.He also holds the record of scoring the most goals (570 in 185 matches) in the history of the sport. *—PTI*

Paul beats Nuno in nearly 4 1/2-hour

NEW YORK, 30 AUG

Tommy Paul and Nuno Borges played well into Friday morning in another post-midnight marathon classic match at the U.S. Open.

Paul eventually came out on top of the 17th-latest finish in tournament history, joining the history books as the second-latest finish in the second round.

"Definitely was happy that it was with the win and not a loss," Paul said while getting stretched out afterward. "It was a blast. It was an emotional roller coaster, for sure."

Tommy Paul *PHOTO: X/@USOPEN*

Paul won the first two sets and had a couple of match point chances to close it out in three. He instead lost the third and fourth sets and was tied in the fifth after going up 3-0.

The American seeded 14th broke Borges one final time with a back-and-forth final point to finish off a 7-6 (6), 6-3, 5-7, 5-7, 7-5 victory.

Naomi Osaka eliminate Hailey Baptiste 6-3, 6-1 in the second round in just 70 minutes on Thursday. *—PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

PSG gets tough slate of opponents

MONACO, 30 AUG

Paris Saint-Germain was handed a tough start to the defense of its Champions League title when the draw was made Thursday, with no opponent from any of the lower-ranked nations.

PSG was drawn against Bayern Munich and Barcelona from the pot of top-ranked teams, while Tottenham came from the pot of third-seeded teams in a repeat of their tight Super Cup game two weeks ago. And the French champion was paired with arguably the two toughest opponents from the lowest-ranked teams: Newcastle and Athletic Bilbao.

Bayer Leverkusen, Atalanta, and Portuguese champion Sporting Lisbon complete the title holders' slate of eight games in the 36-team league phase. "It's always difficult," said PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaïfi, whose team stumbled to 15th place in the single-standings league last season before surging to its first Champions League title. "We forgot last season, we think about this season."

Kylian Mbappe *PHOTO: X/@CL*

Madrid will also face Juventus in a repeat of its 2017 final win, and two French opponents, Marseille and Monaco, where superstar forward Kylian Mbappe started his career.

Lewandowski returns to Poland's national team

Robert Lewandowski will return to Poland as its captain after a row with the previous coach led the Barcelona star to quit the national team. "I'd like us to start training camp with a clean slate. Lewandowski will be the team captain," Urban said.

New coach Jan Urban included Lewandowski in his squad on Friday for the upcoming World Cup qualifiers, saying that his nation's all-time top scorer would get the captain's armband back as well. *—PTI*

DELHI HC RESERVES ORDER ON GAMBHIR'S PLEA

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The Delhi High Court on Friday reserved an order on a plea moved by former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP and Indian cricket team head coach Gautam Gambhir's foundation seeking quashing of criminal proceedings against it.

This matter pertains to allegedly stocking and distributing the COVID-19 drugs during the second wave.

The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to stay the trial court proceedings against Gautam Gambhir, his foundation, and others accused of illegally stocking and distributing COVID-19 drugs. *—PTI*